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Nick Carter Stories

WON BY MAGIC
OR
NICK CARTER'S MYSTERIOUS EAR

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WON BY MAGIC;

Or, NICK CARTER'S MYSTERIOUS EAR.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF JAI SINGH.

"Message for Mr. Carter!"

The wireless operator of the steamship *Marathon*, in the linen clothes and pith helmet ordinarily worn by white people in the tropics, came along the steamer deck with a slip of paper in his hand and stopped in front of a row of steamer chairs under an awning.

"Where's it from?" asked the occupant of one of the chairs, springing to his feet.

"From shore, sir—Calcutta."

Nick Carter, who was holding out his hand even as he got up from his chair, took the paper quickly and glanced at the few words it contained.

"Get up to Nepal quickly."

That was all. There was no signature, and the operator could not say who had sent it.

"It came from the main office of the telegraph company in Calcutta," he explained. "The operator told me a native man brought it in and paid for it. He said there would be no answer, and his own name did not matter."

"It is many years since I was in Calcutta last," observed Nick Carter, to his companions, as the operator went back to the wireless room. "Then it was only for a few days, and I did not make many acquaintances."

A tall, middle-aged man, whose square face and straight-seeing dark eyes, as well as his decided manner of speech, were all suggestive of the successful American business man, got up from one of the chairs and looked over Nick Carter's shoulder at the telegram he still held open in one hand.

"Get up to Nepal quickly," he read. "Does that mean that my boy is there, do you think, Carter?"

"We don't know that the telegram has anything to do with what has brought us to India," replied the detective.

"What else could it be?" demanded the other sharply.

Nick Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, Mr. Arnold, you are known here—by name, at least—as owner of several ships, including the *Marathon*, and your agent, William Pike, has vanished, in a rather mysterious way, from your office in Calcutta. Perhaps the telegram may be from somebody who has seen Pike up in Nepal."

"It may be, although I don't know what Pike could want up in the back country, away from civilization. He isn't that kind of man, from what I know of him. He is more likely to go over to Europe, or, if not, to get to some other big city in India—Rangoon, Lucknow, Cawnpur, or Hyderabad—where he can spend his money and be moderately out of the way of arrest."

"At all events, this message agrees with our own ideas of the direction taken by Leslie," said Nick Carter.

Jefferson Arnold did not speak for a few moments. He was not a demonstrative man, and although his heart was wrung by the strange disappearance of his only son, his face was as impassive as it generally was when putting through some great business deal in New York, with perhaps millions of dollars involved.

Here, on the deck of the finest steamer of his fleet of merchant vessels, with the gently rolling waters of the Bay of Bengal scuffing up under the prow, and the engines, at half speed, gradually bringing the ship nearer and nearer to the wharves of Calcutta, he might have seemed to strangers to be a man to be envied.

Yet, tearing at his heart was the greatest anxiety he ever had known—the question whether his boy, whom he loved better than himself, was dead or living.

The scene was as beautiful a one as nature can produce in her most happy mood. The blue waves, with their lacy-white crests, the panorama of mountain and forest in the distance—still hazy, as the mists of early morning hung before them—and the big city of Calcutta in the

foreground, its white buildings glistening fairylike in the glorious sunlight, all combined to make the approach to this famous Asiatic port one of the most fascinating in the world.

"What's that boat coming out?" suddenly exclaimed Jefferson Arnold. "Couldn't wait for us to get alongside the wharf, eh! We're five miles from shore, if not more. What do you make of it, captain?" he added, in a louder tone to the skipper of the *Marathon*, who stood on the bridge just over their heads.

"Don't know, Mr. Arnold," replied Captain Southern. "Perhaps they're crowded for room at the wharf. Looks like it."

The commander had been gazing at the oncoming boat, as well as at the distant shore line, through his binoculars, and, almost mechanically, he gave orders to drop the anchors fore and aft.

"Going to stop, captain?" asked the millionaire ship owner.

"Yes. It will do no harm. And I want to see what these fellows in the boat are after."

"I'll come up on the bridge, I guess," grunted Arnold. "Come on, Carter!"

The sacred bridge of a steamer is not going to be profaned by the feet of an uninvited person unless he happens to be the owner or some one of equal importance.

Jefferson Arnold and his friends, of course, had the privilege.

One of two young men who had been sitting in steamer chairs with Arnold and Nick Carter seemed to have some idea of following them to the bridge. But the elder of the pair shook his head.

"It wouldn't do, Patsy," he whispered. "Old Captain Southern is a crank about some things, and he looks on his bridge as a sort of private office. Let the chief size it up and tell us afterward."

"I guess we'll have to, Chick," was the disgusted response. "But when I'm working on a case I like to see all I can from every angle."

"Regular angleworm, ain't you, Patsy?" chuckled Chick.

"Oh, come off with the laughing-gas stuff! Better send that to the funny papers," snorted Patsy Garvan. "I'm talking serious business. I tell you there's more in young Leslie Arnold beating it out of Calcutta this way than people think."

Chickering Carter, principal assistant of Nick Carter, stared for a moment at Patsy Garvan, who was only next in importance to Chick himself on the great detective's staff—as if trying to get his comrade's point of view. Then he shook his head, as if he feared there was a great deal in Patsy's opinion.

"What do you think of William Pike?" he asked, as he glanced around to make sure neither Nick Carter or Jefferson Arnold overheard the question.

"What do I think?" blurted out Patsy. "I believe he's the guy responsible for it all. From what I hear, he always was as crooked as a pig's tail. Leslie Arnold was a good-tempered sort of kid, and it wouldn't be hard for this slippery Pike to make him do anything."

"And there was nearly a hundred thousand dollars in gold went with one or the other of them," observed Chick thoughtfully. "If Leslie Arnold went up into the hill country to shoot tigers, he would hardly load himself down with all that money."

"Who believes young Arnold went to shoot tigers?" asked Patsy scornfully.

"That's all Jefferson Arnold has been able to hear about his boy," was Chick's answer. "He told that to the chief when he persuaded him to come all this distance to look into the matter."

"Well, I'm glad he came, anyhow," observed Patsy. "I've never seen India before, and it was a good thing he brought us both along. And old Captain, too. Gee! I didn't think he'd let the good old dog come. But he may be mighty useful before we get through. You never can tell how you may be able to use a trained bloodhound—especially such a good one as ours."

Patsy stopped to pat an immense dog who lay stretched out on the hot deck under the awning, too languid to move, except to let his great eyeballs roll lazily in their sockets in appreciation of Patsy Garvan's caresses.

Meanwhile, Nick Carter, Jefferson Arnold, and Captain Southern were taking the strong, double marine glasses in turn to inspect the boat which was working its way through the surf toward the *Marathon*.

The four men at the oars were low-caste Hindus. They would not have been doing this kind of work otherwise.

They were picturesque-looking rascals.

Naked to their waists, their brown skin glistened in the sunlight like the top of a German loaf. Each wore the white turban that is part of the costume of every Hindu, and on the wrists of some of them could be seen heavy brass rings.

In the stern of the boat—which was a wide, heavy craft, well able to stand the tossing of the surf and to make good time before the steady pulling of the oarsmen—stood a tall native who looked very different from the others.

This man wore a turban like the oarsmen, but there was a jewel fastened in the front of the folds of snowy cloth that glistened like the lens of a powerful flash lamp.

While it was not easy to make out his feature at that distance, Nick Carter saw, with admiration, that the limbs were lean and muscular, and that every movement of the lithe brown body indicated strength and activity.

That this man in the stern was in command could be told in more ways than one. He carried in his right hand a long lance, or spear, such as is used by some of the Indian cavalry regiments, but without the pennon which is generally attached.

Occasionally he emphasized his orders to the crew by giving one or other of them a rap across the bare shoulders with the staff of the spear, always accompanying it with a roaring command. Nick told this from the opening of his mouth, although he could not hear the sound.

For a few minutes longer Nick Carter stared through the binocular glass at the boat and its gigantic commander, while the captain and Jefferson Arnold talked apart.

Suddenly the big Hindu caused his boat to swing around as it approached the ship, and he waved a hand frantically at the rail where Captain, the bloodhound, had poked out his nose and was barking and whimpering alternately in recognition.

"Say, chief!" roared Patsy, looking up to Nick Carter. "That big busher knows you and Captain, too. Look at him."

"Of course he knows the chief," put in Chick, who had begun to make signs to the Hindu. "He knows me, too. We've been in this part of the world before."

"Well, who is he, anyhow?" asked Patsy.

"He is a chief in the hill country, and he calls himself Jai Singh."

"Calls himself?" repeated Patsy. "Isn't that his real name?"

"Why, yes. I suppose it is. But there was a famous rajah named Jai Singh, who lived about two hundred years ago, and who built observatories at Jaipur and Delhi. The remains of them are still in existence, and astronomers say they were magnificent structures for that time, and would be even in this day."

"Gee! Where did you get on to all that?" asked Patsy, open-mouthed. "You're a wonder, Chick."

"Oh, that's nothing," returned Chick. "When I was here with the chief before, we learned a whole lot about India. It was our Jai Singh himself who told us about the rajah and his observatories. He's a good fellow, but he's a terror when he gets into a fight. Don't forget that."

"He makes those sun-baked bluffs at the oars attend to business, I notice."

"Yes. They know that when Jai Singh is behind them, they have to keep moving," returned Chick. "Hello! He's coming aboard."

Even as he spoke, the boat came up to the steamer, and Jai Singh, putting a hand on one of the anchor chains, held his small craft firmly, in spite of the tossing of the waves. He seemed to have a grip of iron.

In another minute or two the boat was secured to the anchor chain by a rope, and the tall Hindu climbed aboard like a monkey, spear and all.

Once on deck, he ran up to the bridge, and putting his right hand to his forehead, made a deep salaam to Nick Carter.

CHAPTER II.

UP INTO THE HILLS.

"Sahib, I am here!" said Jai Singh, in English, in a deep, guttural tone.

"I'm glad to see you, Jai Singh," responded Nick Carter. "But I did not expect to find you so many miles from your home."

"It is to help the sahib that I come," replied Jai Singh, with dignity. "The men of the hills have taken one who must be saved."

"Great Scott!" broke in Jefferson Arnold. "What does he know about it? I always have contended that these Indians know more than seems possible unless they have supernatural powers at their back."

"It is Sahib Leslie Arnold," went on Jai Singh calmly. "In the temple it was told to me that you would come."

"What kind of bunk is that?" whispered Patsy. "Who told him, do you think?"

"Keep quiet, Patsy," warned Chick. "He's liable to hear you. Don't you know that India is the land of mysteries? If you never believed in ghosts and demons, and all that kind of thing, you've got a surprise coming to you. You will find that things are not always what you see in this country. Houdini, Herrman, and Keller are not in it with some of these men when it comes to the black art."

"Black rot!" muttered Patsy, entirely unconvinced.

Jai Singh was a noble figure. His light dress, suitable for such a climate, emphasized his physical grace and strength. The white shirt was open at the throat, and the white linen trousers, coming just below the knee, allowed the muscles of his powerful legs to be seen as they moved about under the dark satin skin like living things.

There were heavy golden armlets clanking at his wrists, and circlets of the same precious metal were around his ankles.

The one thing out of keeping with his picturesque Orientalism was the heavy automatic pistol which hung to a light cartridge belt around his waist.

The latter was well supplied with cartridges, and the naturalness with which the hand of the owner dropped upon the butt of his revolver now and then suggested that he was no novice in the use of that particular weapon of the white man.

"What do you know of my son, Jai Singh?" demanded Jefferson Arnold. "I am Mr. Leslie's father."

"Jai Singh knows that," was the reply. "He sees Leslie's face when he looks at you. I cannot tell anything of Sahib Leslie except that he has gone into the great mountains far up the Brahmapootra."

"Did you see him?"

"No. But some of my young men have."

"When?"

"It is many days, sahib. I cannot tell how many times the moon has come and gone since. But I came down to the sea to find those who might belong to Sahib Leslie.

"Yes?"

"And I burned certain herbs in the forest, and I called to me those who tell me what I want to know. They told me you and Sahib Carter, and his friend, who is Chick, were to be here. So, in my boat, with my men, I came. I am here."

Jai Singh made another obeisance. Then he waited for some one else to speak.

As is customary with Hindus of high caste, Jai Singh had enough dignity for a justice of the supreme court, added to a certain grace and nobility that belongs peculiarly to his race when they feel themselves entitled to consideration.

"You came down in the boat all the way along the Brahmapootra River?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you use the railroad?"

"I do not know anything about that," returned Jai Singh. "Only once have I been carried along by the smoke and fire, and that was with you. It has been the custom of my fathers to go where they would in their boat. I did the same as they," returned Jai Singh simply. "But I will go in the train with you."

"All right! There is no time to lose."

Nick Carter turned to Captain Southern.

"Can you run right in to the wharf without trouble, captain?"

"Yes. I only waited to see what those fellows in the boat were after. Calcutta is a white man's city—not the sort of place where lawlessness is likely to be found. But you never know. Not so many scores of miles in the back country the people are as wild as those in Calcutta are quiet and commonplace."

"That's true," agreed Jefferson Arnold. "Every time I come to India I am struck by the fact that it is a land of amazing contrasts. It never could surprise me to meet a tiger walking along the streets, arm in arm with a cobra de capello, right there in Calcutta. It isn't New York by a long chalk. Yet you will find white women, in European clothing, shopping in that city, over there, just as you will in Thirty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue."

Jai Singh was instructed to get his boat, as well as the crew, on board the ship, and the captain immediately gave orders to steam up to the regular wharf belonging to Jefferson Arnold.

Nick Carter got Jai Singh in a retired place on deck, and the two talked earnestly for nearly half an hour. At the end of that time the great detective had a plan of action laid out which he followed as soon as the *Marathon* was warped up to her regular landing place.

Telling Chick and Patsy to keep somewhere near the wharf, so that they could be found when he returned, Nick Carter strolled off with Jefferson Arnold and Jai Singh to the office of the Arnold corporation on one of the several business streets of the ancient city.

There were white and Indian employees about the place. But in the office was only one young man, an American, who had been brought up in his native city, New York, until he had taken the position of assistant manager in the Calcutta branch of the importing and steamship house of the Arnold Company, a year before.

This young man's name was John McKeever, and he was as keen as a newly ground bayonet.

"Hello, McKeever!" was Jefferson Arnold's greeting. "What has become of Pike?"

"Gone," replied McKeever laconically.

"Know where?"

"No idea. He just simply dried up. I came here one morning and he had cleaned out the safe and decamped. I went to the bank and found he had not deposited much of late, but that, two days before, he had taken out most of the company's balance."

"And they let him have it without question, eh?" put in Nick Carter.

"Certainly. It was not an unusual thing for him to take out all the money he had there—or most of it, especially when one of the ships of the company was nearly due. Everybody knew that the steamer *Jefferson* was expected about that time."

"The *Jefferson* is the sister ship of the *Marathon*, Carter," explained Arnold incidentally. "They are the two finest vessels of our fleet."

"So he had no difficulty in getting the money," continued McKeever. "It was supposed he meant to ship the cash to the home office in New York."

"I see," nodded Nick Carter. "Pretty well managed. But what about Leslie Arnold, Mr. McKeever?"

"He had been in the office two or three times. He said he was going tiger hunting soon, but that he thought he'd wait till the *Jefferson* came in, so that he could hear something about his father and affairs at home generally by direct word of mouth from the captain."

"But he did not wait, after all?"

"No. He vanished just about the time Pike went," replied McKeever. "We are not sure that there is any relation between the two in appearances. But there are the facts, just as I give them to you."

"A hundred thousand dollars, you told me in your telegram, McKeever," observed Jefferson thoughtfully.

"That's what I figure it," answered the young man. "But I cannot swear that Pike didn't fix the books."

"H'm! Very likely he did," grunted Jefferson. "Well, we'll get out on the night train. Jai Singh will have to be our guide. He seems to have some idea of where we may find Leslie. What do you say, Carter?"

"That's the only thing to do," answered the detective. "We will get what things we need and go. There is nothing to be done here. Fortunately, I know both your son and Pike. So does my man Chick. My other assistant, Patsy Garvan, has never seen either of them. But I can rely on him to help when the time comes."

"Will you take your bloodhound?" asked Jefferson Arnold.

"Certainly! Old Captain has been useful in too many cases for me to leave him behind."

"I was hoping you would take him," said Jefferson. "We are likely to find ourselves against some of the tough tribes when we get up the country, and a dog who can follow a good scent will be a mighty comfortable friend in the party."

"Well, that's all, then," remarked Nick Carter. "I just wanted to know from your assistant manager the exact status of the case."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the millionaire, putting an affectionate hand on John McKeever's shoulder. "You spoke of McKeever as 'the assistant manager.' You should have said 'manager and confidential agent.' This is his position here now. He takes William Pike's place."

There was a general handshake, with John McKeever's sharp eyes a little dulled by emotion. Then his employer and Nick Carter went out into the simmering streets.

Seeking as much shade as they could, they strolled slowly back to the wharf where they had left the others.

Calcutta is a hot place in the afternoon, and nothing could be done until the sun began to go down. Then those who had been curled up in any partly cool place they could find for the inevitable siesta, stirred themselves, and the little party made its way to the railroad station.

Nick Carter, Jefferson Arnold, Chick, and Patsy Garvan all gathered in the coach reserved for high-caste natives and white persons, while Jai Singh and his men took their places in a car of lower class, to smoke cigarettes and doze throughout the night.

Captain was in the baggage car, where he made friends with the native train men, and seemed to be as contented as he always was anywhere so long as he had enough food and water.

They had begun the first stage of what might prove to be a long journey in the hunt for the missing Leslie Arnold.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE THE BABOO LOST OUT.

"Say, Chick, what kind of a hang-out is this we're in?" asked Patsy Garvan, as he surveyed his surroundings some hours after they had alighted from the train up in the hill country. "I don't see much besides trees, muddy

water, and monkeys. I bet there are plenty of snakes, too, but they are under the leaves on the ground, I suppose. Is this still India?"

"Yes. We are getting toward the borders of Nepal," answered Chick.

"Come again? Is there any difference between Nepal and the rest of this forsaken country? Gee! I'd——"

"Keep quiet, Patsy!" warned Chick. "Jai Singh speaks as good English as we do. He doesn't like to hear any reflections on his country."

"Does he belong to Nepal?" asked the irrepressible Patsy.

"He's a Hindu, and the whole of India is sacred to him," was Chick's grave reply. "He's got the boat ready. We'd better be getting over there."

It was a small town at which the railroad had come to an end—the extremity of a branch of the main line—and if it had not been for Jai Singh, there would have been difficulty in going any farther.

Hindus of various castes were here, most of them of inferior kind, and they were not disposed to be friendly.

Like all natives of India in out-of-the-way places, they were ever on the lookout for alms, and Nick Carter, like most Americans, would have dealt with them on the basis of many tips if he had been left to himself.

As it was, Jai Singh, with his noble appearance and the prestige he derived from high caste, made the natives get around at his will. He gave a few annas here and there, because you could not deal with men of this kind in any other way, but his tips were never large, and he ordered them about in the offhand manner that had made him a power among his own people.

"A boat that will hold ten men," had been his order to a surly looking native who stood near the platform when the train came to a halt. "Quick!"

"I have no boat," had been the short reply.

"Get one! And listen to me, dog of an unbeliever!" added Jai Singh. "If it isn't ready before the sun goes down behind those palms yonder, why——"

He finished the admonition by raising his spear and flourishing it with a graceful dexterity that the other man understood at once.

The boat was ready at the time set, and Jai Singh superintended the putting into it of such stores as he thought they might need on their journey into the wild country they contemplated invading.

Rice, canned meats and fish, fruits, a bag of hard biscuits, and several skins of water were put in the boat.

"What's the idea of putting water in the boat?" inquired Patsy. "Isn't there enough in this river for us to drink?"

"Poison to white men," replied Jai Singh curtly. "None must drink of the river."

"It does look kind of yellow," observed Patsy. "Thick, too! Still, that might not be so bad if a fellow happened to be hungry. Meat and drink all in one—like an oyster stew. I don't know but what——"

"Patsy!" interrupted Nick Carter.

"On deck!" responded Patsy, with a facetious military salute.

"Please reserve your comments on things in general till we're on the boat and out of this village," ordered the detective, rather sternly.

"Gee! What's biting the boss?" whispered Patsy to Chick, as Nick Carter turned away.

"You're liable to offend somebody about here if you talk too much about the river," answered Chick. "This is a branch of the Ganges, the most sacred stream in India. The chief doesn't want a fight on his hands just because you talk too much."

"I wouldn't say another word if the Ganges got up on its tail and gave me back slack from here to—to—wherever we're going," replied Patsy, who was always bound to have the closing speech if he could get it.

The boat was a large, clumsy-looking craft, which would hold all their party, with the baggage, without overcrowding. Moreover, it was not so clumsy as it appeared, for afterward, when the four natives under Jai Singh's orders settled down to work with their oars, they showed that they could make good time even with a sluggish current against them and in the oppressive heat that even as the sun approached the west, made the white men gasp for breath.

They were not started yet, however.

Jai Singh, Nick Carter, Jefferson Arnold, and Chick were all on the rough landing stage, looking at the boat, to see that everything was stowed in that might be required, when there was a shout behind them. Half a dozen natives were stalking in their direction, and there was an indescribable air of official determination pervading the whole procession.

"Hello!" ejaculated Arnold. "What's broken loose here? What do those black scalawags think they want?"

"Let the sahib keep quiet," requested Jai Singh, in a low voice. "It is I who will talk to them."

"Just as you like," returned the millionaire, with a shrug. "I'm quite willing to keep out of the powwow, so long as it does not hold us up on our journey after my poor boy."

"We shan't be held up," put in Nick Carter. "I'll promise you that."

Jefferson Arnold nodded.

"Stop!"

Jai Singh, with upraised hand, shouted this peremptory order. At the same time he allowed the butt of his lance to drop with a loud bang upon the planks under his feet.

All the men stopped but the one in the lead.

Nick Carter recognized him as the surly fellow they had met when they got off the train, and who afterward had provided them with their boat.

The rascal had demanded enough money to have bought such a boat twice over in India. But on Nick Carter's whispering that it was the best way to avoid delay, Jefferson Arnold had paid it without demur.

"I could get it for you at about half that price," Nick had added. "But it would mean several hours of bargaining, and that would keep us here till the morning. It is desirable to get away to-night."

Jefferson Arnold would rather have paid four times the worth of the boat than be kept another twelve hours in this village.

"What do you want?" demanded Jai Singh now, as the surly native stalked forward.

Nick Carter observed that the native had put on clean white raiment, and that there was a ruby holding together the upper garment on his chest. His turban was new and white, and there were more gold anklets and bracelets on him than had been there when they first saw him.

"Who's the pretty boy with the curtain rings on him?" observed Chick.

"Hum! He is an official of some rank," whispered Nick Carter.

"Yes, and he's dolled himself up so that we shall know it," was the assistant's smiling reply. "He might be a rajah or a begum or something of that kind, judging by his manner."

"I want pay for the boat," returned the man, answering Jai Singh's question. "I am Baboo Punyah."

"Say, Chick!" called out Patsy Garvan, from the boat, in a loud whisper. "What in blazes is a baboo?"

"It means 'gentleman,'" replied Chick quickly. "Shut up, will you?"

"If that's what it means, I don't believe that guy's it," grumbled Patsy. "I thought it was some kind of monkey."

"You have been paid," was all Jai Singh condescended to reply to the demand of Baboo Punyah. "Go back! We proceed on our way in our own boat."

But Baboo Punyah, having by this time eight or ten natives behind him on whom he believed he could rely at a pinch, was not to be lightly dismissed.

"The pay for that boat is much more than I have received. It will be two hundred rupees more or you cannot go!" he shouted, extending both hands impressively. "I wait for the money."

Standing there, his arms folded across his breast, his gold anklets and bracelets, as well as the jewels in his turban and at his breast, glistening in the red light of the dying sun, Baboo Punyah was a dignified figure.

He had the attitude of one who would be as immovable from the position he had taken as the great Rock of Trichinoply itself.

But it is often insignificant things that take the dignity out of the most determined of men. It was so in this case.

Captain, the big bloodhound, had been loaded into the boat, and was lying comfortably in the bottom, with his head between the knees of Patsy Garvan.

Whether Patsy whispered in his ear, or perhaps gave him a sly hoist behind will ever remain in doubt.

What is certain is that Captain betrayed a sudden interest in Baboo Punyah which made Patsy chuckle silently, but which was not observed by any one else.

Getting on his feet, the dog knocked Patsy backward, and contemplated Baboo Punyah as if he were some new production that had never come within his range of vision before, and was somewhat of a puzzle to his canine mind.

"Get him, Captain!" whispered Patsy.

This was enough for Captain. He had no particular grudge against Baboo Punyah, but he did want to know something more about this loud-talking Hindu.

What he did was to jump ashore and carom into the baboo with such violence as to knock him over on his back.

Nor was this all. Captain did not want to hurt the man, but his play was too rough to please the dignified native. He aimed a kick at the dog, but missed him.

"Look out, Chick!" shouted Patsy, standing up in the boat. "Don't let him hurt Captain."

It was evident that Baboo Punyah had for the moment forgotten his intention to demand more pay for the boat in his determination to deal with the bloodhound.

Nick Carter had been watching the little comedy with a grave smile. He would have interfered to keep the dog away, only that he felt the Hindu deserved some punishment for his bare-faced effort at extortion.

But when he saw Baboo Punyah draw a keen dagger from the folds of his white garment, there was no time for more quiet contemplation.

The knife had just come clear of the fellow's clothing, and the long dark fingers were clutching the ivory handle savagely, as he held the point above Captain's head.

Another instant and the dagger would have come down with a powerful stroke that might have brought it into the bloodhound's heart.

But Nick Carter was too quick for the fellow.

With a swinging cuff, he caught Baboo Punyah on the side of the head and sent him scurrying along the platform. Then, without giving the man time to recover, Nick took him by the scruff of his neck and the seat of his white linen breeches, and swung him into the air.

There was a terrified yell from the natives in the background—a shout that was in perfect chorus—but they did not attempt to help their leader.

Nick Carter had Baboo Punyah straight out above his head, holding him there a moment, as if trying to decide what he should eventually do with him.

He made up his mind quickly. With a mighty heave, he sent the Hindu flying over his head, backward and headfirst into the river.

Luckily, it was fairly deep where Baboo Punyah plunged in, and the worst he suffered was the wetting.

Jai Singh dragged him out as he came to the side of the river, the yellow stain of the water marking his white clothing.

Without saying anything more, the disgruntled Hindu walked away, taking his friends with him, and there was nothing more said about additional pay for the boat. The ducking had settled that bit of extortion.

As the four oarsemen began to urge the boat upstream, Nick Carter, sitting in the stern, by the side of Jai Singh, who steered, saw that most of the inhabitants of the village was staring after them curiously.

"I wonder how much those fellows know about Leslie Arnold's disappearance," muttered the detective. "Well, whatever they may know, they will not tell. Fortunately, I think we can do without their help."

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE CRY AT NIGHT.

All night the boat moved up the yellow stream, the oarsemen working with the dogged industry of men who were laboring because they had to do it, and not from choice.

Jai Singh kept them up to their task with an occasional gruff word, and now and then he swung the long staff of his spear over their heads as a hint that he would not permit any "soldiering."

It was early morning when he said quietly to Nick Carter:

"If the sahib would like, we will stop here. It is time for food and drink, for the coming day."

"You mean breakfast, eh?" put in Patsy eagerly. "Good idea! You're all right, Jai."

Jai Singh glanced at Patsy as if half inclined to call

him to account for his familiarity. But he didn't. He had taken a great liking to Nick Carter's good-humored second assistant. Therefore, he was inclined to permit him liberties he would not brook from anybody else.

The men rowed the boat inshore, and Jai Singh jumped out and held it while the four white men disembarked.

They helped him pull the boat far up on the bank, and Nick Carter secured it by a strong rope to the trunk of a deodar, which is another name for the Himalayan cedar.

"There's a cataract not far ahead, I should say, from the way the water rushes down," observed Nick Carter to Jai Singh.

"The sahib is right. The big falls are not far above. We must carry the boat around. But our men will do it. There will be no trouble for the sahibs. We will build a fire now."

"Look here, Jai," broke in Patsy. "How far are we to go before we get action on Leslie Arnold. Aren't we nearly up to the place he is in?"

"The young sahib, Arnold, is in the Land of the Golden Scarab," replied Jai Singh. "It is near, or far, as it may happen. I cannot tell. The people of that land are men who move often."

"That may be so," interposed Nick Carter. "But they have a city of their own, with a temple and many people. That much I know."

"Right," acknowledged Jai Singh. "If the young Sahib Arnold is there, we can go to him. If he is with some people of the Golden Scarab, somewhere else, we may have to travel long. We shall see."

"Not much encouragement in that, Carter," grumbled Jefferson Arnold, as Jai Singh moved away to superintend the building of a fire. "Still, I suppose we cannot do better than to let him lead us on."

"It is all we can do at present," was the detective's reply. "It is safe to trust Jai Singh, but we must let him do it in his own way."

"I wish his way wasn't so slow," interjected Chick. "Anyhow, he is going to give us a breakfast, so we should be thankful for that. He makes good coffee," he added, sniffing appreciatively.

In a short time Jai Singh set forth a breakfast, from the stores they carried, that might hardly have been expected in such a wilderness.

Not only was there coffee, made with the skill that only the native-born East Indian ever attains, but it was softened with condensed milk kept in small air-tight cans, and sweetened with very good sugar.

There were fruits, all kinds of canned sweetmeats, and some of the dried fish of which so much is used in tropical climates, with curried rice and other viands distinctly Indian.

The four oarsmen had built their fire at a considerable distance, and down the wind, so that its smoke should not annoy the white people.

The laborers, who were of the coolie caste, knew their place, and never presumed to even look at Jai Singh unless he addressed them.

Even then they usually kept their faces averted, as if the light of his countenance were too dazzling to be met by their unworthy eyes.

After the meal, Nick Carter and Jefferson Arnold sat smoking, as they rested in the shade of the spreading trees around them, amusing themselves by looking at the distant oarsemen.

"They are big, strong fellows," remarked Nick Carter. "But they are full of superstition. You can see, by the way they huddle together, that they are afraid of what might come out of the woods. I do not mean wild animals, or even snakes—although there are plenty of them in the forests of this country. What these fellows fear is something of preternatural shape. If they weren't so thoroughly in awe of Jai Singh, I am inclined to think they would get away and leave us."

"That is true, sahib," broke in Jai Singh, in a deep growl. "But the men are not to be blamed. Many strange things happen by night. Even I, who am afraid of no man, have known the chill fingers of fear on my shoulder ere now in such places as this. If all tales be true, the country back here is full of strange things, of which it is not wise to speak."

"Oh, cut it out, Jai!" interrupted Patsy, with a shiver, half real and half in mockery. "What kind of guff are you giving us?"

"There are tales of men going into these forests and being swallowed up. No man has seen them again, not even their bones."

"Wow!" howled Patsy.

"Others have gone in, or been driven in, alone and unarmed, by powers they could not stand against. After many days they have come out with their skin a silver gray, all cracked and dried. They have had neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak, nor fingers to make signs with, so that none could tell what had befallen them."

"Cheerful old cuss, isn't he?" whispered Chick to his chief.

Nick Carter nodded thoughtfully. He had heard similar, and even more gruesome, tales himself. He knew these parts of India better than Chick.

"Don't be too ready to laugh," he answered. "No white man ever has understood Indian magic—probably never will. When you have never been brought face to face with it, you may not believe it. When you come right to it, you can only wonder."

"I know," answered Chick, with a shrug. "I have heard of the Indian fakir who stands in the middle of a wide, open space out-of-doors and throws a rope into the air. The rope straightens out till the top of it is lost in a cloud that gathers in the otherwise clear atmosphere at the faker's bidding. Then down the rope climbs a boy, who proves that he is flesh and blood by going around the ring of white people who have been watching, and lets them feel his hands."

Nick Carter shook his head slowly.

"That is one of the common tricks of the wise men of this country. It has been told so often by different people that I see no reason to doubt it. There are other things done by these fakirs quite as unaccountable. In the face of them, you can hardly deny that there is more mystery in this land than in most others in the world."

The talk flagged now. It was becoming too hot for conversation, and everybody composed himself for sleep in the shade of the trees.

Nick Carter and Jefferson Arnold would have liked to press on. But they knew traveling was out of the question in the tropical heat of the day.

Soon after sundown they were on the move.

As Nick Carter had remarked, there were rapids not

far from where they had stopped for sleep, and it was necessary to carry the boat and stores around the cataract on land, and put it into the river again at a safe distance above.

By the time this was accomplished, the night had advanced so far that Nick was afraid they would not make much more time before daylight.

He was strengthened in this belief by the fact that the whole party was pretty well exhausted by the labor of getting the boat and stores around, and was obliged to rest.

It had meant a walk of more than two miles, and everybody had been obliged to do his full part. The labor had been much heavier than Jai Singh had anticipated.

It was easy for all of them to fall asleep. The slumber they had had in the daytime was not so refreshing as this, with blackness around them and even the ordinary voices of nature stilled.

Chick had laid down by the side of the bloodhound, and was one of the first to lose himself. It had been arranged that they were to sleep for an hour and then go on.

The others each dropped down into any attitude that seemed comfortable, and in a few moments all were as oblivious to the outer world as Chick himself.

Suddenly a strange cry echoed through the blackness of the forest. It was a shriek of agony that echoed and reëchoed until it died away into a wailing moan. Hardly human, yet a sound that no animal could have produced.

Captain heard it; Chick knew that by the way he stirred and whimpered.

"What was that?" whispered Nick Carter.

In the deep gloom, Chick could see the detective sitting up, ready for action, his rifle across his knees.

"You heard it, did you?" asked Chick quietly. "It woke me."

"Hush!"

The cry arose again, but was more faint than before.

"What kind of game are they giving us?" muttered Jefferson Arnold. "Is it a screech owl?"

Jai Singh, without speaking, picked up his spear and waited for what was to come.

For the third time the scream sounded through the forest—long drawn out and sending in a sobbing wail.

"It is the devils of the forest. There are unclean spirits walking near," muttered Jai Singh.

"Spirits or no spirits, clean or unclean," said Nick Carter. "I am going to see."

He struck a match, but, so powerful was the ghostly influence even upon the detective's usually steady nerves, that his hand shook, and he dropped the match.

Perhaps he did not try much to hold it, for it seemed to him, even as the light broke out, that it was hardly a wise thing to do until he knew what was in the vicinity.

"I have my flash light in my pocket," he muttered to himself. "But, on the whole, I guess we'd better investigate in the dark."

From the four coolies, some two or three hundred feet away, there came no sound. Whether they had heard the cry or not Nick did not know. Certainly, they made no sign.

Captain continued to whine in a low tone, as if frightened. Nick put his hands on the dog's back and found it wet with the perspiration of fear.

"That settles it," he thought, as he got a grip on himself. "When a dog is frightened—especially a dog as good as Captain—it is time to look into it." Then, aloud, to Jai Singh: "Stay here with the dog, Jai Singh, and mind your four men don't run away. We are going to see what made that racket in the woods."

Nick Carter led the way into the black thicket. He was closely followed by Chick, Patsy, and Jefferson Arnold. Each man carried a rifle, as well as a revolver in his belt.

If the mysterious disturber in the forest turned out to be dangerous, they would find out whether bullets would not put an end to the noise.

On the other hand, if it really came from spirits, it would be well to find that out, too.

CHAPTER V.

THE SNAKE CHARMER.

Through the heavy foliage they forced their way, and had gone several hundred yards before Nick Carter suddenly stopped. As he did so, the others banged into him, just as the horrible cry broke forth once again.

"Look!" whispered Nick.

Some two hundred feet ahead, so far as they were able to calculate, a patch of greenish light, faint and elusive, darted about among the dank undergrowth.

The light seemed not to have any defined source. It was a mere blur in the blackness—hardly more than a vapor. Yet it was unmistakably there.

"Keep behind me and don't make any more noise than you can help!" warned Nick, in a scarcely audible tone.

The soft click of the lever as he slipped a cartridge into the chamber of his rifle made itself heard, and his three companions likewise prepared their weapons for use.

As they proceeded, the ground grew more open, the trees standing farther apart. Always that pale-green light was before them, becoming stronger as they advanced.

"Here we are!" breathed Nick at last, in an awe-stricken voice.

He was peering from behind a huge creeper-entwined tree into a large clearing. Whether this strange ring in the midst of the forest had been made purposely by man, or whether it was merely a freak of nature, none of them could tell.

One thing was evident, however, and that was that it had been used for generations for whatever hideous rites were performed there. The ground had been beaten and stamped flat, and it was so hard that it had withstood even the fierce rains that sometimes tear up the whole landscape in India.

In the center of the ring was a shapeless lump, whose character Nick could not determine, try as he would. The green light bathed it like a curious moonlight, while the silence of the place was oppressive.

"What do you make of that thing in the middle of the clearing, Chick?" asked the detective. "It seems as if it might be——"

His sentence was cut in two by another of the unearthly shrieks which seemed to come from nowhere in particular.

"Look!" gasped Chick. "For Heaven's sake, look!"

The shapeless lump in the center began to move—slowly and rhythmically. Suddenly, with a hoarse croak, it ceased its swaying to and fro and sprang suddenly into life.

Rearing upright, it revealed itself as a tall, nearly naked Hindu, with the lean and haggard face of what is strangely called, in India, "a holy man."

His only clothing, besides the inevitable turban, was a loin cloth, and his long, lean arms and legs, his scraggy neck, and the fiercely burning eyes, set deeply under his shriveled forehead, gave him an eerie aspect that was indescribably terrible.

For a few moments he stood raised to his fullest height—for he had reared himself on his toes—as he took from the ground at his feet a small bag suspended from some kind of string that looked like part of a shriveled vine.

Besides the bag, which he hung around his neck, he had a collection of gruesome objects. They seemed to be withered parts of animals or reptiles, bones, and other horrors.

Beyond question they were charms of various kinds, and equally certain this wretched creature was a medicine man or dealer in "black art."

Nick Carter knew that there were thousands of fanatics in India who practiced all kinds of strange rites. Many of them were horrible, and there were tales of murders done for sacrifices to their gods. These murders the British government had never been able to stop.

The man began to dance around in uncouth gyrations. The green light was always upon him, and the collection of strange things suspended about his body rattled horribly at each movement.

Now and then he paused in his dance to bend his ear to some object he gripped in his right hand. Through it all there was a dreadful hypnotic influence emanating from him which held Nick Carter and his companions spellbound.

For five minutes and more this continued, while Nick Carter, grasping his rifle in his left hand, fought back an almost irresistible impulse to raise his weapon and shoot the half-human creature gesticulating in the clearing.

It was just when Nick felt as if he could not stand the suspense any longer that the man turned slowly toward a certain part of the forest surrounding him and beckoned with one of his skinny hands.

For a second or two there was no response. Then the dense growth of creepers on that side parted and from it stepped a young Hindu, dressed like the medicine man, in a loin cloth and turban.

He was a finely built young fellow, and, as he had nothing on to speak of, they could see his muscles ripple under the dark skin as he came forward. They also observed that his chest was heaving, as if he had undergone some extraordinary strain.

He moved slowly and in jerks. His eyes unnaturally distended, and once or twice he made a violent effort to drag himself back, as if resisting the power of the skinny claws beckoning him forward.

Finally the young man stood in the middle of the clearing, rigid and motionless, his staring eyes still fixed on the strange man who clearly held him under a hypnotic spell.

The medicine man took from his loin cloth a small reed and began to blow on it, producing a low, crooning noise, like a bagpipe rather out of tune.

He kept this up for some little time without any result. Then, suddenly, from somewhere—seemingly from the solid ground—a score or more of ugly, venomous-looking snakes came forth and seemed to be moving to the cadences of the small reed.

"Snake charmer!" muttered Chick.

"Yes," returned Nick, in a scarcely audible tone.

"Gee! Here's a circus. But I'd hate to take a girl to see it," added Patsy Garvan.

Jefferson Arnold said nothing. But he stared intently, for he believed he recognized the young man who had been drawn to the center of the ring.

"Say! What are we going to do about this?" exclaimed Patsy, in a subdued tone. "The snakes are crawling up on him."

It was true. There was a sharp change in the melody—if it could be called that—of the pipe, and several of the snakes began to circle closely around the young man. Some of them seemed to strike in his direction, but their fangs never quite reached him.

The whole performance was one that snake charmers in India have carried on for ages, but it was none the less eerie and extraordinary to those who now saw it for the first time.

One of the snakes—the largest of the squirming collection—was halfway up the young man's leg.

The reptile did not stop there, however. It went up to his shoulder, and finally crawled around his neck till its head was close to the victim's livid face.

The young fellow shuddered, but did not try to shake the creature off. It looked as if his power of will had been taken from him. He could only suffer.

"Carter!" whispered Jefferson excitedly. "We've got to save that boy."

"Of course we must," answered Nick.

"I know," rejoined Jefferson impatiently. "You can take it easily. But I *know* him."

"Who is he?"

"I can't be quite sure, because it is dark, and that infernal green glow doesn't tell much. But I believe it is Adil, the young fellow my boy engaged as a sort of body servant. He says all white men in India have a servant of that kind."

Nick Carter's grip tightened on his rifle.

"Keep cool, Mr. Arnold! We'll save him!" he promised, in low, tense tones. "But we must be cautious."

"It *is* Adil!" came from Arnold. "I feel sure of it. Every move tells me so. I've half a mind to shoot that black scarecrow who is doing it all. I can do it without much trouble. Those snakes are doing just as he tells them. That big one is going to strike Adil before he gets through."

"I don't think so," declared Nick. "The old fakir doesn't mean to let that happen."

"What's he doing it all for?"

"I can't tell yet," confessed Nick Carter. "Nobody understands these men thoroughly. They may have any of a hundred reasons for what they do. This probably is merely an incantation of some sort. Or Adil—if it is Adil—may be a prisoner."

"He is a prisoner. I'm sure of that," rejoined Jefferson Arnold. "He would not be going through this buncombe otherwise. He's too level-headed for that. But if

this medicine man has him hypnotized, as it seems, what can the poor fellow do?"

"We'll get him out of it," repeated Nick. "But we must have just a little patience. The game of the snake charmer is to keep him in suspense for an hour or so, and then probably let him go—unless there is some object in keeping him that we do not see."

"That's just it," quickly replied Arnold. "There may be a lot of rascals with this blackguard who is doing all the mischief. We don't know who may be hiding behind those trees."

"That's so," assented Nick Carter. "But we must wait and see. We may get a clew to the whereabouts of your son right here, if we don't spoil it by rushing things. I could pick that snake off with my rifle, without touching the man. But it wouldn't be safe, because the snake might bite him in its death struggle."

This was obvious, and Jefferson Arnold nodded assent.

"Listen!" he whispered nervously. "What did I tell you? There are a lot of people among the trees."

Proof of this was furnished by the sudden rising of a weird, not unmusical, dirgelike chant, from the blackness surrounding the clearing.

The fakir straightened up to his full height again—a favorite gesture of his, it seemed—and answered the chorus with a few notes on his pipe.

Then he settled himself down to play for the snakes. Striking a plaintive minor, he brought forth more music out of the reed than either Nick Carter or any of his companions had supposed was in it. The result was that all the snakes began to move in time to the notes.

"I wish I could shoot that rascal down," muttered Jefferson Arnold. "I feel that I owe it to poor Adil, anyhow."

"Not yet," whispered Nick Carter. "When we do strike, we want it to be of real effect."

Bang!

Whether the nerve of Chick had suddenly given way under the strain, or whether he had fired by pure accident, he never could tell. All he knew was that he had pulled the trigger of his rifle before he realized what had happened.

He had not taken aim at anything in particular, but it chanced that the head of one of the whirling snakes on the ground was in the direct line of fire, and was blown off as clean as if it had been severed with an ax.

With a shriek which explained who had been guilty of the unearthly screams that had first disturbed Nick Carter's party, the medicine man whirled around as if looking for the person who had fired. Then he put his reed to his mouth and blew a loud, steady whistle.

It was a signal to the snakes which all understood. The big snake that had been around Adil's neck loosened itself and fell with a flop to the hard ground. The others began to dart about in all directions.

The medicine man, bewildered, made a dash for cover. But here his haste was unlucky for him. It chanced that he trod squarely upon the body of the big snake.

Probably, now that the music had ceased, the snake was no longer under the man's control—or it may simply have been frightened.

However that may have been, it uttered an angry hiss, flung back its head and arched neck, and like a stroke of lightning, buried its poison fangs twice in the bare leg of the faker.

With a screech of agony, he flung up his long, skinny arms, ran around stumblingly in circles, still screaming, and at last fell in a heap in the middle of the clearing.

As he did so, something that he had been tightly holding in his right hand from the beginning fell to the ground and rolled in the direction of Nick Carter.

CHAPTER VI.

A RUNNING SKIRMISH.

"What's that?" involuntarily exclaimed Nick, as he tried to make out the nature of the object.

"Looks like a stale doughnut," offered Patsy Garvan. "But the old guy who dropped it is all in just the same."

"Adil!" called out Jefferson Arnold.

"Hush!" warned Nick Carter. "Keep quiet till we see."

"I do see," insisted the impetuous millionaire. "That's Adil, and I——"

"I'll save him," interrupted Nick. "But we've got to wait till we see what is behind those trees."

Jefferson Arnold recognized the justice of this, and restrained himself from dashing out into the open, as he would have liked to do.

Adil seemed to have been released from his hypnotic trance by the jar of the rifle report. He stood still and looked about him with a light of intelligence in his eyes that had not been there before.

For a minute he seemed uncertain which way to go. Then, with a half-uttered ejaculation, he sprang over the body of the medicine man and the snake, and raced in the direction of the tree behind which Chick was still crouching.

The report of the rifle, and perhaps its flash, was the guide to the young East Indian, who, such a short time before, had been helpless, with the venomous snake twined about his neck.

As he dashed across the clearing, he stooped and picked up something about halfway. It was the object that had fallen from the dead snake charmer's fingers, and which Patsy had said looked like a stale doughnut.

Holding this thing, whatever it was, tightly in his hand, the fugitive kept on till he reached the edge of the open space.

"Come on, Adil!" shouted Jefferson Arnold, regardless of everything except the fact that the young man was running to him. "This way, my boy!"

Adil stumbled as he got to the shelter of the trees. Then, with a gasp he fell into Arnold's arms, in a dead faint.

"He isn't hurt, is he?" asked Patsy, trying to see Adil's face, but, of course, failing, in the darkness. "What's the trouble? Fainted?"

"Leave him to me," returned the millionaire. "I'll take care of him."

"How?"

"Let me get any kind of a start, and I'll have him to our camp and into the boat before this gang can get out. There is a big crowd of rascals in the wood, over there."

"There's no doubt about that," observed Nick Carter. "We'll hold them there, too."

"Sure we will!" declared Patsy energetically. "We can stand off all they can bring over. Eh, Chick?"

"I guess," was Chick's brief reply, as he brought another cartridge forward in his rifle. "You get, Mr. Arnold."

"That's what I'm doing," was the pithy rejoinder.

He swung the light, but sinewy form of Adil over his shoulder, and broke his way through the wood the way they had come. Jefferson Arnold was a New York business man. But he had also hunted big game in several countries, and he was a woodsman who knew the game.

Hardly had Arnold gone, when a crowd of dark-skinned men broke cover across the clearing. They had knives and spears in their hands, and they were bent on mischief.

"Let go, boys!" cried Nick Carter.

He fired his rifle as he spoke, and simultaneously there was a report from the gun of each of his two assistants.

They fired two more shots apiece as fast as they could pump them out, and the Hindus stopped in amazement that was dangerously near panic.

Yells of anger arose from them, but they did not seem to know what to do in the face of this sudden attack by the white men.

Nick Carter and his two assistants took advantage of the check they had given to dart to fresh cover, a hundred feet or so to the rear.

"It's a good thing those dubs haven't got guns," remarked Patsy. "It's a wonder they haven't. What do you think they are?"

"Just ordinary ruffians, I suppose," returned Nick carelessly. "They may be a gang from the hills, for anything I know. Look out! Here comes a spear!"

It was immediately apparent that, although there were no guns in the ranks of the dusky enemy, they could hurl spears with precision and viciousness.

Four or five of these weapons—exceedingly dangerous when in skillful hands—came hurtling among the trees.

The aim was good, too, for Chick had only just got behind a deodar when two spears came singing along and stuck in the trunk of the tree just where his head had been a moment before.

Patsy had a narrower escape than Chick, for one of the spears caught the sleeve of his white linen coat and fastened it to the tree.

"Gee! There goes a new coat sleeve!" exclaimed Patsy, with comic anger. "They've taken out a three-cornered bit just above the elbow, and I'll have to go in rags till I get to a city where I can buy another coat. Holy mackerel! I'm always 'it' when there's bad luck going about."

Meanwhile, Chick found himself hard pressed. He could not get out from behind his tree without offering himself as a target for a spear, and he could not stay where he was indefinitely.

He had only six more shots left in the magazine of his rifle, and no time to reload.

"I'll give them all I've got," he muttered. "If that doesn't clear the way, I'll have to go out there and get into a rough-and-tumble scrap, taking chances."

He fired a couple of shots into the ranks of the oncoming Hindus, hoping to hit some of them, but without knowing exactly where his bullets would go. It was impossible to take steady aim under the circumstances, and he did not try.

"I'll fire low," he thought. "That's one of the fundamental rules in sharpshooting. Then, if you hit anybody, you are pretty sure to do something worth while."

"Look out, Chick!" came excitedly from Patsy. "The woods are full of them! Mind they don't crawl up behind. Gee! Here's where I'll beat it for the Bowery—or as near as I can get."

"Back!" suddenly shouted Nick Carter. "Get back, both of you! They are working around on my side. They'll cut you off in another minute!"

"That's what!" roared Patsy. "But we can do some cutting ourselves. Whoop! Get out of my way! You black skunks! Come on, Chick!"

"Of course I will," replied Chick, with the calmness of desperation. "I hear them on my left, but they haven't got us yet. Hold together, boys! We'll beat 'em!" he went on, hardly knowing, in his excitement, what he said.

Sending one more shot in the general direction of the enemy, Chick turned and lunged back into the darkness.

"Whoof!"

It was Nick Carter who made this involuntary ejaculation, for, in the blackness, Chick had plunged headlong into him.

"I beg your pardon!" blurted out Chick.

"That's right!" laughed his chief. "Never forget your manners, old man. Bend low and run! It's our only chance at this stage of the game."

Side by side, the three detectives raced over the rotting undergrowth and leaves, and it was surely luck that prevented any of them dashing their brains out against some tree.

They had become somewhat used to the darkness by this time. What had appeared at first as merely a black wall resolved itself now into a forest, with trees spaced so that it was possible to get around them with some ingenuity, plus a great deal of agility.

Dodging, swerving, stumbling over fallen limbs and upheaving roots, occasionally gasping for breath, and conscious all the while that the enemy was gaining, the trio rushed on.

Not only was there danger from those who were making a rear chase of it.

Some of the natives had flanked them. Their spears glistened as they were brandished fiercely, while their owners uttered low guttural threats which sounded supernaturally awful in the darkness.

Nick Carter had had experience enough as an army officer to know a great deal about military strategy. He was aware that the menace of a flanking movement was something whose importance no general overlooked.

If once the wings of their black pursuers outstripped them far enough to close in and get them in a ring, they would be as helpless as rats in a trap.

"Get to the river!" was Nick's low-voiced instruction to his two assistants.

"How far ahead is it?" asked Patsy. "I've lost track of distances since I've been in this wood."

"A hundred and fifty feet," replied Chick. "Keep quiet! Don't talk! Save your breath!"

"I notice you're not using any sign language yourself!" retorted Patsy. "And you don't sound as if you had more breath than the rest of us, either."

Patsy Garvan could not have kept out of an argument if there had been a spear within six inches of his heart. He dearly loved the last word, no matter where he was.

A sullen gleam of water could be made out through the tangle of trees. Surely they could cover the short distance between them and their boat, lying at the river bank before the foe cut them off.

They were not there yet, however.

A dark figure shot up ahead of the three flying detectives. Hardly had this one figure come into view, when there was another and another.

"They've closed us in!" cried Chick. "Just what I was afraid of."

"Looks like it," assented Nick Carter, "Well, there's only one thing to do. We must rush them and take our chances of breaking through."

"They'll be taking the chances—not us!" shouted Patsy, with his usual drive-ahead cocksureness. "We could lick that bunch if our arms were in a sling."

"Of course we can, but we'll have to fight. There's more of them every moment. Blaze away, both of you, and fire from the hip. Don't take the time to aim. After that, revolvers! Come on, boys!"

Nick Carter's tone was full of confidence, and his two assistants would have charged a regiment at that instant.

Several spears whizzed in front. But the darkness caused them all to go wild, although they were near enough to be uncomfortable. Patsy insisted afterward that one scraped the skin off the end of his nose and mussed his hair.

"Here you are!" shouted Nick. "There's a hole in their line."

"Where?" questioned Patsy.

"If you don't see it, make one!" snapped Chick. "Rush through somehow!"

Shoulder to shoulder, Nick Carter and his two men charged at the yelling natives and went through their formation like the center rush in a varsity football game.

It was at this moment that they heard Jefferson Arnold roaring excitedly:

"Swing to the right, Carter! Swing out to the right!"

The three obeyed this injunction, just as there came some more flying spears.

At the same instant two rifles spoke from the river bank. The shots took the Hindus by surprise, and for a few seconds they were completely demoralized.

Nick and his two assistants dashed through the undergrowth and gained the edge of the wood. They caught a glimpse of the river and their boat, with the four oarsmen seated, ready to row away at the word of command.

Patsy gave a low chuckle of satisfaction. As he said afterward, that boat, with the four black men as crew, looked very good to him just then.

Standing on the bank, close to the boat, were Jefferson Arnold and Jai Singh, each with a rifle in his hand. It was their shots that had taken the nerve out of the enemy.

"Jump for the boat!" bellowed Jefferson Arnold.

"Jump!" echoed Jai Singh.

They did jump.

CHAPTER VII.

ADIL TELLS HIS STORY.

It was a big leap in the darkness, especially for men half-spent by a laborious run. But the three were all strung up, and they had more spring in them than might have been expected.

They dropped into the boat higgledy-piggledy, and immediately Jefferson Arnold and Jai Singh followed.

"Hack away that rope at the bow!" roared Arnold.

Jai Singh, ax in hand, obeyed, just as one of the pursuing natives poised his spear to send it at Chick.

Nick Carter had seen the action in time, however. Although the detective had dropped into the boat all in a heap, he had kept his automatic pistol in his right hand, while holding the now unloaded rifle in his left.

Up went his revolver as the Hindu raised his spear. The pistol roared before the spear could leave its owner's hand.

The native crumpled up as the bullet reached him. His companions did not press forward quite so fast. They were disposed to be cautious now, although none the less vindictive.

The boat swung out to the middle of the river, as the rowers dug in their oars to save the yawl from yielding to the strong current made by the falls a little distance below.

As the coolies bent to their work, two spears flew at them. One went clear over their heads, but the other caught the stroke oarsman in the forearm, making a nasty, jagged wound.

The injured man rowed on doggedly, only glancing carelessly down at the great red scar in his brown arm, as if to see how bad it might be. He seemed satisfied that it would not disable him, and the shrug with which he took his eyes off it told how little he cared for what did not seem such a trifle, after all.

The river was wide at this point. So, five hundred yards farther up, and about that distance from the shore, Nick Carter directed Jai Singh to let go the light anchor they carried.

As the tall Hindu obeyed, the boat swung gently around to her cable.

In the after part of the boat there was an awning of bamboo, thatched with palm leaves. At Nick's suggestion, lanterns were lighted under this awning, so that they might look themselves over and see what damage had been done.

First of all, Nick took a roll of antiseptic bandage from his pocket and bound up the wound on the arm of the stroke oar, putting on some salve that he always carried in his "first-aid" kit.

The man submitted in stolid silence while Nick examined the arm. When it was bound up, he said "Thank you!" in English. That was all, except that he looked rather curiously at the barbed head of the spear which lay in the boat where it had fallen.

The detective picked up the spear and made a close examination of the barbed point.

"No poison, I should say," he remarked briefly. "If there were any, it would show in a sort of sticky glaze. Still, the antiseptic salve I've put into that gash on the arm won't do any harm. Besides, it will help to close the wound quickly."

The patient went back to his seat, and Nick glanced at

Jefferson Arnold, who was speaking to Adil, as the young man lay, still nearly exhausted, on a blanket under the awning.

"What does he say, Mr. Arnold?" asked Nick.

"He has told me something about my boy," answered Arnold, in shaky tones. "Carter, we're going to catch up with him soon."

"One day's journey," put in Adil, in a feeble voice.

"Who are those fellows who had you, Adil? And how did you come to be where you are?" asked Jefferson Arnold.

"We came to them farther up the country. Sahib Leslie wanted to hunt tigers, and he told me to be ready. I did what I was told."

"Who else was with my son?"

"Sahib Pike."

"Ah! He went tiger hunting, too?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"We had gone far up, near the head of the Brahamapootra, when Sahib Pike he go away. Sahib Leslie he sorry, but nothing could be done. He was afraid Sahib Pike got hurt, but he did not know."

"I'll bet he didn't get hurt," threw in Patsy Garvan wisely. "This Pike person was working a frame-up on Leslie Arnold, for a dollar."

"There seems reason in your opinion, Patsy," nodded Nick Carter. "But we haven't heard it all, remember."

"I don't see where we want to hear much more," growled Jefferson Arnold. "It's a pretty clear case, I think. I'll fix Pike when I meet him. It is all his doings. I am confident of that."

"You haven't told us how Leslie Arnold got into the power of these men up in the hill country," Nick Carter reminded Adil.

"We were in camp one night, when Pike called out that there was danger. Sahib Leslie was asleep, in his blanket, to keep off the snakes that go about at night in the forest. We had a fire, but it had gone down."

"You bet it had gone down," remarked Patsy Garvan. "I never knew a camp fire that didn't go down, unless you lay down before it and blew it most of the night."

Nick Carter and Chick both smiled. They gave Patsy credit for close observation. Both had noticed this peculiarity of camp fires themselves.

"There was a fight, and I believe Sahib Leslie killed some of them," continued Adil. "We could not tell how many there were. But it seemd as if fifty men jumped out of the darkness and grabbed at him."

"They wanted to take him prisoner, eh?"

"That's what they did at last," answered Adil. "But for a while there was a fight which was good. I stood by the side of Sahib Leslie, and we shot four—five—many men. They had spears like that."

He pointed to the lance that had wounded the oarsman in the arm, and which lay in the bottom of the boat.

Nick Carter had taken the implement in his hand, and was looking it over thoughtfully.

He had seen at a glance that it was different from any of the weapons used by the Sepoys or other men in the lower part of Hindustan. Still, it was well made, and there were strange figures burned into the iron head with some strong acid.

"The party must have divided, Adil," he suggested. "You were brought down here a prisoner. But Mr. Leslie went somewhere else."

"Yes. Those who brought me wanted much money before they went back to their own country. They said they would make me get it for them."

"I see. You were to be a decoy?"

Adil evidently did not exactly understand this word "decoy," but he knew, in a general way, what it meant, and he nodded.

"What did you tell them?"

"I would not speak," replied Adil. "That is why they told the medicine man to make me see clearly what must be done."

"The blackguards!" ejaculated the millionaire. "They were trying to torture him into obeying them."

"Say, chief!" interrupted Patsy. "Let's pull out of this. We ought to get after the gang that have Mr. Arnold's son without wasting any more time. Adil can take us to the place, can't he?"

"If he can't, I can," boomed the deep tones of Jai Singh. "These men are of the low caste who are servants of the men of the Golden Scarab."

"What's a scarab?" asked Patsy. He always liked to get to the bottom of things without loss of time.

"It is a beetle, Patsy," replied Nick Carter. "Go on, Jai Singh. What do you know about it?"

"I know there is a country far up above the hills where the snows are, and that the Golden Scarab is their god. They are big men, who fight well, and they have cities as fine as any in India, with great temples, on which are signs cut in stone by their ancestors, and where they worship the Golden Scarab. It is in one of those cities that we shall find Sahib Leslie."

"Holy pancakes!" broke out Patsy. "I feel as if I were going nutty. I'll be glad when I get back to the good old United States. This India is too rich for my nerves."

"Keep quiet, Patsy," admonished Chick. "I want to get at the rights of this thing. So does the chief. What's the use of you interrupting all the time?"

"Interrupting?" echoed Patsy. "If I didn't say something once in a while, I'd blow up."

"Go on with your story, Adil," requested Nick Carter. "And, Patsy, please do not ask any more questions. I'll do the cross-examining, if there has to be any."

"They brought me to the forest over there, where you saw me, and the medicine man passed his hands before my eyes, so that I had to do what he said, and keep on moving about in the clearing. He had made me take off my clothing, except for what I have on."

"I see," nodded Nick. "Go on."

"The medicine man had something in his hand that he kept on putting to his face. It seemed to talk to him."

"Bosh!" growled Jefferson Arnold, below his breath.

"You picked it up, did you not?" asked Nick.

"Yes. It is still in my hand."

He opened his hand and revealed the curious object that Patsy had described as a stale doughnut.

Nick Carter took it in his fingers and shuddered slightly. The thing was the ear of some image. It was about twice the size of a man's ear, carved elaborately out of gray soapstone.

"What is it?" murmured Nick, as a strange feeling, uncanny and enervating, stole throughout his whole being.

"It is the ear of one of the little gods of the Land of the Golden Scarab," rumbled Jai Singh. "When you find the image it belongs to, you will also find Sahib Leslie Arnold."

CHAPTER VIII.

READY FOR INVASION.

"Well, the thing to do is to push on," decided Nick Carter briskly, as Jai Singh handed back the soapstone ear to him. "We'll keep this pretty relic as a sort of cue for what we are to do when we get to the Land of Golden Scarab. Are we on the right road to that interesting place?"

"Straight up this river till we get to where it pours out of the sacred rocks among the Himalayas," replied Jai Singh.

"It is on the borders of Nepal, isn't it?" asked Chick.

"Not far from there," returned Jai Singh. "It would be well to take up the anchor and go on."

"Aren't we going to have another mix-up with that bunch of coffee-colored robbers over there?" grumbled Patsy.

"They have gone away," Jai Singh told him gravely. "We may meet them when we get to the city beyond the snow. They are not likely to follow us now. No doubt they know a quicker way to get to the place where the Golden Scarab is supreme. But I do not know it. We can only go the way I will show."

The anchor was lifted, and the four oarsmen settled down to their work in the dogged, matter-of-fact manner characteristic of them.

It was the middle of the next day when they reached the headwaters of the branch of the famous Ganges up which the boat had been toiling.

They had not seen anything of their enemies of the day before, and it seemed as if the men who had been with the medicine man were none too eager to avenge his death.

Soon the rest of the journey would have to be done on foot, with the men carrying such supplies as they might need on the way to the home of the Golden Scarab.

Although they had neither seen or heard anything of the men belonging to the medicine man who had given them such a lively tussle when the snake charmer met his death, they had a strange sense of being watched, without being able to explain exactly what the feeling was.

There had been several places where, on account of rapids or shallows in the river, it had been necessary to carry the boat around.

Each time this had happened, they had posted a guard to look out for lurking enemies, but nothing had been seen of the rascals they believed were not far away.

Patsy had expressed his disgust on each occasion because there had been no chance of battle.

But Patsy always had a chip on his shoulder. So Chick only laughed at his pugnacious comrade, while Nick Carter pretended to be wholly oblivious.

"I wish they'd come out of their holes," grumbled Patsy. "I'd rather have them sting me than stay back there, where you can't tell what they are after. What do you think about it, chief?"

"Ask Jai Singh," was Nick Carter's response.

Jai Singh spoke for himself, without being questioned.

"Such is not their way," he told them, in his deep voice. "So long as they see we keep guard, they hide away deep in the forests. Yet they watch—they watch! Look you! See you that way to the left—far away, above the big trees yonder above the sun. It looks like a pinch of wind-driven dust?"

"What is it?" asked Jefferson Arnold.

"They are forest birds, disturbed by their scouts," replied Jai Singh impressively. "Aye, you may laugh. But my eyes are keen, and I tell you that it is so. It is a warning."

They gazed at the snow-capped mountains some distance ahead of them, and which were hazy on that account. Nick Carter knew them for part of the great range of the Himalayas, mysterious and grim—as if they locked in their bosom the secrets of ages.

The forest land near the head of the river soon began to open out on either side into a barren plain, and the stream constantly dwindled, until it was scarcely a hundred yards across and flowed sluggishly over the shoals that gave hardly depth enough for the flat-bottomed boat to navigate.

"By all accounts, the Golden Scarab country should lie over there, beyond the mountains," was Nick Carter's comment. "Little is known of it, and I cannot even give it a better name than the one I have just used. But there is no doubt in my mind that it exists, and that it is such a place as Jai Singh has described."

"I speak according to the knowledge that has come to me," put in the tall Hindu, with dignity.

"I pray heaven that my poor boy is safe, and that we shall not get there too late," was the fervent hope of Jefferson Arnold. "Does anybody know the time of day and the date? It must be many weeks since my son was captured."

"My watch got full of water coming up the river, when we moved the boat at the big falls," remarked Nick. "Time is a matter of guesswork in these regions. All we can do is to push on as quickly as we can."

"That rascally Pike does not mean to let us find my boy if it can be helped," returned Jefferson, with a sad shake of the head. "I suppose he was afraid Leslie would keep after him to get back that hundred thousand dollars—or, failing in that, bring the scoundrel to justice. That is the secret of my son's disappearance, I feel sure."

"Probably," conceded Nick. "If it is, we may have strong hope of saving him. Jai Singh says the feasts of the Golden Scarab, when there are many living sacrifices of human beings, are few and far between. We shall get there before the next one, if we keep on steadily as we are doing now."

Jefferson Arnold leaned forward to look into the detective's face.

"Do you mean, Mr. Carter, that there is actual danger of my boy being killed in some fanatical ceremony among those people over there?"

"I mean that we must go after him quickly, Mr. Arnold," was all Nick Carter would say. "Let me take a look at those mountains through my glasses."

For perhaps two minutes the detective stared through his double field glasses at the mighty hills in the distance. When at last he took the glass from his eyes, there was a smile of satisfaction just visible at the corners of his mouth.

"From what I can make out, there is some sort of pass

on the right shoulder of the main peak," was his decision.

"The sahib has spoken truly," agreed Jai Singh. "There is such a pass. So far as I know, it is the only one where a man may pass in safety."

"You have been through it?" queried Chick.

"No."

"Gee! How do you know about it, then?" interjected Patsy Garvan. "Just a hunch?"

"The wisdom of the hills where I live is not understood by white men," returned Jai Singh gravely. "I know what I know."

"Well, you know a great deal more than I do about this forsaken country," muttered Patsy. "I wouldn't care if I didn't find out any more about it, either. If we weren't going after young Mr. Arnold, and that crook, William Pike, I'd be satisfied to quit right here. I'm not inquisitive—about some things."

"Yet, how do you know about the pass?" pressed Nick Carter.

Jai Singh did not reply at once. He bent his head and seemed to be in a deep reverie for some moments—almost as if in a trance. Suddenly he straightened up, and speaking in a low, dreamy tone, answered:

"How can I tell exactly how it is that I know? It may be that, long years ago, before I was born, my people forced their way through to battle with those who worship the Golden Scarab. Sometimes, in the night, I seem to see a picture of men of my race and caste going through a pass, with spears ready to strike."

"Punk!" muttered Patsy.

Nick Carter gave his second assistant a sharp glance. Jai Singh did not hear the remark, apparently, for he continued, in the steady monotone he had been using:

"One of our royal house may have been in the battle, and I, who am of his blood, keep it in my memory."

"That may be all so," commented Jefferson Arnold. "But I didn't take much stock in this second sight, or whatever you call it. That sort of thing doesn't go in business; I know that."

So matter-of-fact a person as the millionaire, who had made his money by plain hard-headedness and commercial acumen, was not likely to make much belief in, or patience with, the occultism of the East. He was not ashamed of his skepticism, either.

"Yet will I prove that my words are true," was Jai Singh's dignified rejoinder. "We shall soon meet men of the Golden Scarab."

As he said this, he skillfully brought the boat to a stop in the shallow water near the shore, and jumping in, followed by his four oarsmen, pulled at the craft till it was firmly fixed in the soft mud of the bank.

With the four men to help, the labor had been nothing.

"This is as far as we go on the river," announced Jai Singh. "Now we walk. Will the sahib give orders to the men?"

Nick Carter nodded and directed the oarsmen to line up in front of him. Adil, without being told, took his place by the side of the oarsmen.

"Not you, Adil," put in Jefferson Arnold.

"I go with the others," returned Adil briefly. "I must find Sahib Leslie, and yonder is the way."

"You shall go, of course," Nick Carter told him. "But not all these four men. Some of them must be left behind, and I am going to find out which ones by drawing straws. It is a custom in my country. You may stand with my two young men from America."

He indicated Chick and Patsy Garvan, and Adil willingly enough took his position by their side.

"What about these others?" asked Jefferson Arnold. "If they can fight as well as they row, they'll be useful fellows to take with us."

"I'm going to talk to them," replied Nick. Then, turning to the four oarsmen, he began: "We go yonder, across the mountains, to find the white man who has been taken away. You know that?"

They bowed with the native dignity of all men of their race and muttered an unintelligible assent. Nick continued:

"It is a strange country, and the men there are fierce and cruel. They have strange worship, and their gods are not yours. Whether we will come out of that country alive no one can say. It is possible that the white man who went into the forests with Sahib Arnold may have taken him into the strange land beyond the mountains, and that he will tell the men of the Golden Scarab enough about us to give them power we cannot beat."

"Not by a jugful!" interrupted Patsy Garvan. "I'll bet we lick them if ever we get within striking distance. That's a cinch."

"We will all go," said one of the oarsmen. "It is not necessary to draw lots. We will save the young sahib."

"I knew it!" exclaimed Patsy. "Those boys are the goods, if they *are* the color of an old tan shoe."

But Nick Carter shook his head.

"Only two can go. The other two must stay and take care of the boat and what is in it till we get back."

But the detective knew, even as he said this, that it would be useless to talk. Surely enough, when the procession began to move, the whole four oarsmen were included.

CHAPTER IX.

OVER THE PRECIPICE.

With the boat hidden in the reeds which grew along the river shore, and everybody carrying some of the baggage that Nick believed might be required, the party plunged into the foothills and slowly arose toward the lower ridges of the mountains.

All the rifles had been cleaned and oiled by Nick Carter and his two assistants. Then the former had inspected them all carefully.

"It would be awkward if some of these guns were to jam just when we were in the middle of a scrimmage with the people over there," he observed, after he had pronounced them all right.

They came to a belt of forest where the ground rose sharply. On the other side of the thicket was a bare, precipitous rock, which formed a natural barrier to the mysterious land where the rites of the Golden Scarab threatened the existence of Jefferson Arnold's only son.

They were traveling in the daytime now. The fierce heat of the lower country had become tempered by the breezes from the mountains, and Nick Carter desired to have the benefit of the light now that they were in a region that even Jai Singh did not know very well.

They were obliged to skirt the bare rock for several miles. The silence was awesome, and the glare of the

sun on the rock became more and more oppressive as they went on.

Ahead of them was the opening that Nick divined was the entrance to the upper passes. The little party swung in to get to it as quickly as possible.

It was lucky that they did swing in, for at that instant an arrow whizzed by them and struck with a sharp ring of metal against the face of the rock.

"The people of the Golden Scarab use the weapons of their fathers," remarked Jai Singh calmly. "Their arrows kill when they strike."

"Poisoned?" asked Nick.

The tall Hindu shrugged his shoulders, as he repeated, in a significant tone:

"I have said that they kill."

Nick Carter, Chick, and Patsy had all thrown up their rifles almost simultaneously with the passing of the arrow. But Jai Singh called out:

"Don't shoot! There may be more of them. Keep under cover! If you shoot, the sound would carry far, and would bring the others down on us. I saw the one who sent the arrow. Leave him to me."

"I'd like to get that fellow myself," grumbled Patsy.

Nick Carter motioned him to lie down close against the rock, where the others had already thrown themselves, and Patsy had to obey.

But Chick broke through restraint. He simply could not lie there while an exciting incident was in progress in which he felt he could take a useful part. So, while Nick Carter was holding Patsy down, Chick followed Jai Singh over the rocks and into the heart of the mountain.

Chick carried his rifle, and his revolver was in his pocket. Jai Singh had his spear—a weapon which, in his capable hands, was equal to any firearm—and he kept it ready in his muscular fingers, ready to hurl it when a foe should appear.

The fellow who had sent the arrow was too cunning to allow himself to be seen. When he had drawn his bowstring he was some eighty yards away, and above the party headed by the detective, and he had kept out of sight.

Jai Singh and Chick had covered a good half of that distance before the foe could notch another arrow to the string.

Just as the two pursuers showed themselves above a ledge of rock, an arrow flashed toward them.

It was like a striking snake, and the "whang" is made sounded to Chick as if it were right in his ear.

But there was another flash just as the arrow came. It was Jai Singh's spear.

He swept it sideways just in time to prevent the missile burying itself in Chick's chest. There was a sort of snapping sound, followed by the tinkle of metal on stone.

Jai Singh had cut the arrow in two with one stroke, and it was the barbed-iron head falling upon the rock that had caused the tinkling Chick had heard.

The barbed arrow point had been so near to Chick that the side of it had grazed his shoulder, tearing the white linen of his coat, but not breaking the skin below.

"Go ahead, Jai Singh!" sang out Chick. "We've *got* to get that fellow!"

The Hindu and the detective dashed up the rough slope until they came to a narrow, slanting ledge about two hundred feet above the narrow chasm in which the rest of the party were standing.

They were jammed against the side, so as to be out of reach of possible arrows or spears.

Jai Singh forced his way ahead of Chick and was at once almost on top of his man on a path where there was hardly room to turn around.

Just as Jai Singh was about to seize the fugitive, the latter dropped to his knee, holding the point of a spear aimed at the chest of his assailant, while the butt of the weapon rested on the ground.

Jai Singh could not stop himself. He had the choice either of hurling himself upon the spear or falling over the precipice.

"Wait a moment!" shouted Chick. "I'll get him!"

He had his rifle poised, but he could not shoot while Jai Singh was in the way.

There was little time for consideration.

The latter had already decided what to do, and, as Chick rushed forward, determined to close with the enemy at any cost, Jai Singh disappeared into the abyss.

Chick could not look to see what had become of him. Urged on by his own impetuosity, he was flung upon the man with the spear.

How he managed to avoid the point of the weapon he never could tell. But he did it somehow.

The sudden disappearance of Jai Singh over the precipice disturbed the Golden Scarab warrior, and his spear dropped almost to his side.

He did not hesitate to fight, however.

It was a desperate combat in which Chick found himself. Even without the threatening spear, there was peril enough to have satisfied the most reckless searcher for adventure.

Chick noted, even as he grasped the fellow's two arms in his strong hands and forced him backward, that there were certain points of resemblance between the dark, scowling faces before him and those he had glimpsed in the forest when the poisonous snake had made an end of the fanatical "holy man" who had tortured Adil.

"It's one of the same gang," thought Chick. "Those fellows weren't down the river for nothing."

He and his foe were both on the very brink of the precipice. The ledge was only a few feet wide. To make it worse, the ledge sloped slightly toward the great chasm, and Chick instinctively drew back as he felt himself slipping toward the edge.

"One of us has to go over," he muttered. "I'll try to prevent the pair of us taking the leap. But——"

There was a sudden movement by the native, as he glared evilly into Chick's face, and Chick felt himself going past his enemy and slipping!

For one wild moment he glanced about him, to see whether there was hope of rescue anywhere.

He saw that Nick Carter, Patsy, Adil, Jefferson Arnold, and the four natives of the party were gazing at him anxiously, and he knew that Nick had waved to him, while saying something that Chick could not make out.

"It's no use!" he groaned. "This is where I pass in! Well, I'll take this brute with me!"

He struggled frantically to keep on the sloping ledge, while holding tightly to the other man's arm.

"You go!" grunted the native, in laconic English. "You go!"

"Wonder whether that is all he knows of United States," thought Chick.

It may be wondered that Chick would pay attention to such a triviality as this Hindu's knowledge of English at such a time, when inevitable death seemed to stare him in the face.

The answer to that is that, in moments of awful danger, the mind will often run on things that are of no importance. Many a soldier in a wild bayonet or cavalry charge goes to his death humming ragtime without knowing what he is doing.

"You go!" repeated the tugging, straining man from the mountains.

As he said this again, Chick's foot slipped from the sloping rocky ledge, and he was hurled into space!

CHAPTER X.

THE LOST ONE FOUND.

For the merest splinter of a second, Chick was in a confusion of mentality that took no note of anything. Then, before he could realize that he was plunging to a horrible death, there was an agonizing tug at his right wrist, and he thought his hand had been taken off by some kind of saw-edged knife.

"Ugh!" he ejaculated involuntarily.

Something swept past his eyes, and just as he knew that it was the body of his foe plunging downward into the valley, he also understood that he was hanging by one arm over the awful depths!

His hand had caught in a crevice in the rock, and though his wrist was bleeding and the rough edges of the stone seemed to be cutting him to the bone, still he was hanging in comparative safety.

"Bad enough; but it might have been worse," he muttered philosophically.

Even if he could not get up to the ledge, at least he had not yet dived to certain death on the bowlders and ridges that floored the cañon.

"Hold on, Chick!" shouted Nick Carter, at the top of his voice. "We are coming!"

Chick did not hear what his chief had said, but he knew that he must have been seen by his friends below. The only question was whether he could bear the pain and hang on where he was till they got to him.

For three minutes, which seemed to Chick like three hours, he hung there, with the edge of the rock digging deeper into his flesh, and his heart skipping beats oftener and oftener as his strength seemed to be leaving him.

"I'll lose my senses soon," he thought. "I can feel myself going. Well, the sooner the better!"

"Keep still, sahib!"

It was the deep voice of Jai Singh, and it seemed to be behind, as well as below, him. The sound gave Chick new courage.

"Hello, Jai Singh!" he managed to reply.

"I come up soon. We both get out!" went on Jai Singh. "Only, don't let go. That would end it. Wait till somebody comes."

So Jai Singh could not help him! Chick had hoped at first that the powerful Hindu was in a situation to lend him a hand.

As a matter of fact, Jai Singh had had a narrower escape than Chick. He had grasped the root of a shrub growing from a crack in the face of the rock, and thus had saved himself from going to the bottom.

If the shrub had not happened to be of a tough species, the root would have broken off under the tremendous strain put upon it by the weight and thrust of the falling Hindu.

But Jai Singh did not fear.

With the fatalistic calmness of his race, he retained his grip, and, though he felt the root giving way a little under his weight, decided that it would hold him—unless the fates had decided that his time to die had come.

In either case, there was nothing he could do except to wait and see.

Suddenly two arrows came whizzing from above. One struck close to Jai Singh, the other narrowly missed Chick.

Instantly there was the response of three shots from below, echoed by shouts from somewhere around out of sight.

"What is happening?" muttered Chick. "Are they fighting over me, and I not able to make a move for myself? If I could only get up to that ledge!"

Jai Singh said nothing. He knew perfectly well that he was an open target for the men who were sending their arrows from some safe cover above him. But, since he could not help himself, why should he give way to futile lamentations?

There were no more arrows. Instead, a chorus of shrieks and oaths in a strange tongue burst forth. Then Chick saw a white man tearing down a narrow path which wound around the face of the rock above him.

Seemingly there was nothing to prevent him diving over the edge when he should come a little farther.

Chick had just time to see the fugitive on his headlong way, and to note that two dark-skinned men who resembled the rascals they had met when the medicine man had been killed by the snake in the forest were following. Then something else seemed to leap into his vision from nothingness, although common sense told him it had been there all the time.

The something was a cleft in the rock at the edge of the precipice. It was only a few feet from that which held him by his one wrist.

"If I can reach that crack," he murmured, "I might be able to drag myself up, and——"

Chick did not finish the sentence even to himself. Taking a firm grip of himself, so that he should not allow mere pain to swerve him from the purpose he had formed, he swung, with all his power, in the direction of the crevice he had just noticed.

As he did so, it seemed as if the wrist held in the other fissure might be torn apart. But he persisted, and, as the tips of his fingers caught the rough rock, he pulled himself up.

It was indescribable agony, because he was obliged to pull to some degree on his maimed wrist.

Nevertheless, he did not flinch. With a tremendous tug, he raised himself so that half his body lay on the rock.

"If I can pull up the rest of the way, I'll make it yet," he thought. "That chap above will be over if I don't stop him."

The young man—hatless, and with his white garments rent in all directions—still showed in his face and gen-

eral aspect not only that he was a gentleman, but that he was not of a nature to be easily subdued.

"By George!" was Chick's exclamation, as, with a last painful effort, he got to the narrow path and lay panting for breath. "It looks like——"

He got to his knees and braced himself for a shock that would mean life or death to two people.

The white stranger had lost control of himself entirely now. There had been curves in his downward path on the face of the rock that he had taken advantage of to check himself twice. The second time he had almost stopped.

Now he was on the last bit of path, and there was nothing to hold him back. Twenty steps more and he would be on the narrow ledge where Chick crouched, waiting!

It was out of the question that the flying man could stop there. He must keep on! Then—the leap to death!

"What can I do?" thought Chick.

It was not in a despairing tone that Chick asked himself this question. He put it to himself seriously, and with the object of finding an answer.

Of course, he had not the time to go into it in detail. This was only his general idea.

Fortunately, Chick was in the habit, in an emergency, of taking action instinctively, and generally such action turned out to be wise and effective.

So now, as he saw the white stranger coming toward him at frantic speed and utterly beyond self-control, Chick curled himself up in the path, planted his two feet firmly against some slight equalities of rock near him, and prepared for a tremendous concussion.

He got it. Hardly had he taken the position in which he hoped to be able to stop the helpless man, when the latter plunged down the last few feet.

"Throw yourself flat!" yelled Chick. "Come at me headfirst! Come on! I can hold you! Right down!"

Before Chick had finished shouting his instructions, the man had obeyed the first one.

He let himself go like a ball player sliding to first base. Flat on his stomach he hurled himself, and into the diaphragm of Chick went his head.

The shock was tremendous. Chick had braced himself to receive the charge, so that not all the breath was knocked out of him.

He had not much left, but what he had he utilized in warning the man he had saved to hold on for dear life.

"Lie still!" he shouted. "You're all right! Don't stand up! They're after you!"

Chick had seen that three of the pursuing natives were dashing down the mountainside.

Each of them carried a spear, and there was no reason to doubt that he could hurl it with the precision of Jai Singh himself.

The only reason they did not send their weapons ahead of them now seemed to be that they had not time.

At least, that was Chick's first reading of it. Then he changed his mind, as he saw that the spears were fastened to them by a cord that passed around their neck and over one shoulder.

The cords had become entangled in some way, and all three of the men were trying desperately to get them loose.

Down they came! Then—just as they were going to throw themselves upon Chick and the young man he had saved, and neither of whom had had time to get to his feet—there was a bang, and the foremost of the three rascals threw up his hands, whirled around, and went over the precipice!

"Get the other two!" roared the familiar voice of Patsy Garvan, as his good-tempered face appeared above the edge of the rocks at the back.

He was seen to be hurrying along to get to the narrow ledge, and his rifle was ready to send another shot at the companions of the fellow he had shot.

"Hold on!" roared Jefferson Arnold. "Don't shoot! You might hit my son!"

"Your son?" cried Patsy.

"Yes," replied Jefferson. Then darting forward until he was close to the young fellow who had come tearing down the rocks, he held out both hands, as, in sob-choked tones, he cried:

"My boy!"

It was Nick Carter who saved Jefferson Arnold from pitching over the precipice, by throwing both his arms around the millionaire as he leaped forward to grasp the hands of his son.

"What? Is this Leslie Arnold?" shouted Chick, bewildered.

It was not necessary to repeat this question, for the two Arnolds, father and son, had dropped each other's hands, and Leslie now had his arms around his father's shoulders.

"Look out!" roared Patsy. "Here they come, twenty of them!"

He pointed up the way the scoundrels had followed Leslie Arnold, and by which they had suddenly retreated.

It was apparent why the two men had gone back, although Nick Carter was the first to see it.

"Take cover! Quick!" he thundered. "Those two are bringing the whole pack about our ears."

Everybody rushed behind rocks, rifle in hand, except Nick. He was looking over into the chasm.

"Chief!" cried Chick anxiously. "What's the matter? What are you doing out there? They'll fill you full of arrows and poison. Come back here!"

Nick Carter waved his hand to silence his terrified assistant. Then he flung himself flat upon the narrow path, with one of his long, sinewy, capable arms stretched down over the precipice.

There was a momentary strain, a quickening of the great detective's breath. Then—a tall, dark, lean figure, in scanty white clothing, topped by a large white turban with a jewel in the center, leaped lightly upon the narrow path.

"Thank you, sahib!" said Jai Singh calmly, as, taking Nick Carter's hand, he dragged him to the safety of the overhanging rock.

It was not Jai Singh's way to offer effusive thanks, even for the saving of his life. But the detective knew that, even if he could not have depended on Jai Singh to the last drop of his blood before, he certainly could command it now.

"How many of those men are there, Mr. Arnold?" asked Nick of Leslie. "I mean, of those fellows from the other side of the mountains."

"About twenty here," was the reply. "In the whole

country where they worship the Golden Scarab, many thousands."

"I don't care about the thousands," answered Nick Carter. "What we have to attend to is the twenty or more who followed you."

He put his head a little away out from the rock. A dozen of the peculiarly fashioned arrows rattled around around him.

"Poor marksmen, those people," remarked the great detective, with a smile, as he drew back his head.

CHAPTER XI.

NICK'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPON.

"They were taking me up in the hills," explained Leslie Arnold, in reply to a question from his father. "I broke away two days ago, and have been wandering about ever since."

"Without food?"

"No. I managed to get enough of the cakes they use over there in Bolongu to keep me alive. I took them from my guards when they were sleeping. Only half of them were ever awake at one time. Generally they left five or six to guard me, while the others rested."

"Must be a tired lot," remarked Patsy, as he peeped a little way out from the rocks to see what the enemy was doing.

"Who took you up there, and how was it?" went on the elder Arnold. "Was Pike in it?"

Leslie Arnold clenched his teeth and drove one fist hard into the palm of his other hand.

"Yes. The scoundrel! He took the money from the business, and he is over there, in Bolongu."

"The Land of the Golden Scarab," put in Jai Singh quietly. "It is also called Bolongu. I did not tell you."

"If you had, I should have known a great deal more about it," remarked Nick Carter. "Bolongu is a comparatively familiar name to me. I had heard of the Land of the Golden Scarab only occasionally. Pike is up there, is he?"

Leslie Arnold would have answered, but just then there came a concerted howl from above that indicated an intention on the part of the enemy to do something and to do it quickly.

Adil had been scouting without the knowledge of any of the party. He returned now, with a grave face.

He turned toward Nick Carter, as if to tell him something, when he caught sight of the face of Leslie Arnold. With a cry of pleasure there could be no mistaking, he rushed at his young employer and grasped both his hands.

"Adil!"

"Sahib!"

"Where did you come from, Adil? I thought they'd killed you."

"They tried. But Sahib Carter would not let them. The medicine man died by a snake. The others ran away when Sahib Carter and the others from America bade them. But you, Sahib Arnold? How is it?"

"I got away four days after they took you down into the hills to offer you as a sacrifice in the land you came from. That was to make the sacrifice good for that part of the country," answered Leslie.

"Gee! These people from Bolangu, or the Land of the Golden Crab, or whatever it is," put in Patsy, "never overlook any bets. I suppose if they were going to sacrifice me, they'd frame it up in the Bowery or Union Square, so as to make it stick in New York. They make me sick."

"What have you found up there, Adil?" asked Nick Carter, who had been waiting with what patience he could command to question the young Hindu.

"They are coming down all at once. They have been commanded to do it, even if some are killed. I heard them talking."

"In English?" asked Chick.

"Yes. They use the tongue of the white man all over India," supplied Jai Singh. "Even in Bolongu, which is outside the pale, they still carry on the language they learned from the white man two hundred and fifty years ago. The tribes over the Himalayas have all been in Lower Hindustan at different times."

"I know that to be true," remarked Nick Carter. "That is why they are so dangerous. Always, when Oriental races pass under the influence of the Caucasion, they must be kept in close communion with him ever after, or they will forget his civilization, and retain only his cunning."

Patsy Garvan had heard this with some signs of weariness. He wanted action, not dissertations on the white and Hindu races.

"Are we going to try out those guys up there, chief?" he asked.

"We shall have to hold them back. Where are the four men of Jai Singh?"

"They are here, sahib," returned the tall Hindu composedly. "I called them while I hung over the rock."

"Gee! There's nothing slow about Jai Singh," observed Patsy. "He's as slick as Jay Gould ever was."

"Are the boys all here?" asked Nick Carter.

"They are here," was the grave response.

"They'll have to fight," put in Jefferson Arnold. "Have we guns enough to go around, with one for my son?"

"He can have my rifle," answered Nick Carter. "I will depend on my revolver. It is a weapon I am used to, and I have more confidence in it than in a rifle, especially at close quarters."

Leslie Arnold took the rifle with a smile and word or two of gratitude. As he handled it familiarly, making sure that the magazine was properly supplied with cartridges, Nick had no fear that the young man would not give a good account of himself if there should be a mix-up with his late captors.

The detective, having seen that his party were all properly armed, determined to reconnoiter before going out to meet the enemy.

Even with everybody counted in, including the two Arnolds, Adil and Jai Singh, the four coolies, himself, and his two assistants, he could muster only eleven.

Captain, the bloodhound, had been left to guard the boat. He would have made the twelfth, and Nick rather regretted he had not brought the faithful animal with him.

"Captain always makes good," said Patsy Garvan emphatically. "He could lick six of those Bolongu citizens, and then put a crimp in the hide of the Golden Cat, to make it more binding. I'd bet on good old Captain every time."

"There are twenty against us," observed Nick.

"At least that," nodded Leslie Arnold. "There may be two or three over that number."

"So that they have odds of at least two to one," observed Chick. "Well, that isn't bad. They haven't any guns—have they?"

"They have their bows and arrows," answered Leslie. "Their marksmanship is something that we cannot afford to despise, either. They have been shooting with bows and arrows for many centuries, and they get what they aim at."

"Funny they never took to guns," remarked Patsy. "They must know about them."

"Of course they do," returned Leslie. "But they despise them. At least, the fighting men do. I dare say there are people back in their cities—wise people, too—who would not know a gun if they saw one."

While talking thus, they had been busy getting ready for the charge Nick Carter meant to make. He had seen that they did not mean to let Leslie Arnold go if they could help it, and that there would have to be a fight to keep him out of their hands.

"What are they so anxious to hold you for, Leslie?" asked his father.

"They know that you are a very rich man," replied Leslie briefly.

"Well?"

"Pike has told them they can get many sacks of gold from you for me."

"I see!" grunted old Arnold. "A plain case of holdup, eh? Brigandage and ransom? Well, we'll see."

Jefferson Arnold grimly examined his rifle and pistol, and looked at Nick Carter inquiringly.

The detective said nothing. He stepped away from the others, and, concealing himself behind a huge bowlder, managed to get a good view of the rascals who were perched about the rocks above them, ready to make a concerted rush at the command of their leader.

"Come on!" whispered Nick to his party. "We'll steal as near them as we can, and then let fly at them all together!"

"That's the stuff!" chuckled Patsy.

Cautiously, Nick Carter went forward, with Chick and Patsy close behind. Then came the other two white men, with the four coolies. Jai Singh and Adil brought up the rear.

They had managed to advance until they were within about fifty feet of the big rock behind which Nick knew the advance guard of the Bolongus was stationed.

There were four in this group, and Nick intended to overcome them first if he could, thus paving the way to the next lot.

If once he could get the weapons away from these twenty odd, he could safely leave them where they were, or send them down the river, bound, in care of the four coolies. Then he could take his own time about coming back with the Arnolds, unless they should determine to follow Pike over the mountains.

Whatever plans Nick Carter might have formed, they were quickly knocked aside by the fact that the whole twenty-four—which was the number of Bolongus ahead of them—came rushing down at once, while another party, whose presence they had not suspected, surged up from below, hemming them in.

"Let drive!" commanded Nick. "No quarter! It is fight or die now!"

He laid low two of the rascals who were preparing to drive their spears into them. Then he caught another who had taken his bow from his shoulder and was fitting an arrow to the string.

Chick and Patsy made good use of their pistols. Then they rushed forward, with a yell, to clean out everybody in front of them.

The skirmish became lively at once.

Nick Carter soon perceeived that Leslie and Adil had either made a great mistake in the number of the men who had been bringing them down from the other side of the Himalayas, or else that the party had been unexpectedly augmented by other Bolongus that he had not thought were in the neighborhood.

In any case, it did not take him long to realize that they were surrounded, and that there must be lots of determined fighting if they were to get out at all.

"Keep close, Patsy! Mind they don't get in between you and Chick, or me," he warned, as he continued to pump bullets into the enemy. "Keep your heads low, both of you! They can't send their arrows near the ground, because the rocks are in the way."

"I noticed that," returned Chick, as he shot down a big rascal who was about to hurl a spear at him point-blank. "Their spears are worse than their arrows, it seems to me."

"Look out, Carter!" suddenly bawled Jefferson Arnold. "They've got Leslie again!"

This was true. In some ingenious way, the dusky warriors had contrived to get Leslie separated from the others, and were forcing him to their rear.

"Come on, boys!" called out Nick Carter.

That was all he said, but both Chick and Patsy knew, from the tone, that it meant business.

Disdaining cover, the detective jumped into the middle of the path and rushed into the crowd of dark-browed Hindus who were shooting hatred from their black eyes as fast as they were sending arrows on their vain mission of death.

"Club your rifles and knock them down," was Nick Carter's order.

He swung his heavy revolver—he had no rifle—and brought down the foremost man like an ox struck by a sledge hammer. Then he darted forward until he was by the side of Leslie Arnold.

Two powerful natives were holding the young man by the arms, but in his right hand he still gripped the repeating rifle which he was no longer able to use.

With one blow of the revolver, Nick sent the man on Leslie's left to the ground, and shooting out his left fist almost simultaneously, he caught the other fellow and laid him flat by the side of his comrade.

"Get to work with your gun, Leslie!" shouted Nick Carter. "Here come more of them!"

Indeed, it seemed as if there were no end to the evil-looking rascals now.

They came from below, as well as above. There was murder in every one of their fierce, scowling faces.

"It's no use!" exclaimed Leslie Arnold. "They have us now. We can only try to fight our way down the hill, and get clear if we can."

"You bet we can!" yelled Patsy Garvan, who had been fighting so hard that he was bathed in perspiration. "We can wipe out the whole works, if we stick to it. Come on, Chick! Watch me lay out that crooked-eyed citizen in front—the one who is swinging the spear."

Chick had emptied the magazine of his rifle, but the

weapon made a splendid club, and he circled it viciously in the air, so that it cleared the way all around him.

But, fight as they would, it was apparent that the small party could not hope to prevail against all these savage Hindus. There seemed to be fifty, at least.

It was now, when the situation looked hopeless, that an inspiration came to Nick Carter.

He saw that his party could not win with ordinary weapons. But he might use something else. It was worth trying, at all events.

With a loud shout of "Look! All of you!" he raised his hand and held before these men from the Land of the Golden Scarab, something upon which the sun shone redly and seemed to endow with life as he waved it about.

For a space while one might count three there was silence. Then, as Nick stepped forward, holding the object, whatever it was, in his hand, and pushing it into the face of the first man in the rank, an awful shriek arose, and the whole crowd turned and fled.

"Holy Gumbert!" cried Patsy. "What's the answer?"

"Chase them!" ordered Nick. "After them!"

"What's struck them?" asked Chick.

"Never mind!" returned Nick. "We've got those fellows on the run! Keep them there!"

That the whole gathering of Bolongus had been seized with unreasoning panic was perfectly plain.

They kept on running, throwing down their spears and bows and arrows, and still Nick Carter and his party kept after them.

It was well into the night before Nick gave up the chase and called his men together.

"It wasn't necessary to go after them so far, I guess," he said. "But I wanted to make sure that they were fairly on their way. We are not quite into their country. But I think we may go there at some future time, if we can get a force together large enough to make sure that we shall be able to get back. For the present, we must be satisfied with having rescued Leslie Arnold."

"That's enough for me," interposed Jefferson Arnold, as he put an arm over his son's shoulder.

"But what about William Pike?" objected Leslie. "I don't like the idea of his getting away with all that money."

"We'll nail him some time, my boy," was Jefferson's cool response. "He can't stay over there in that wild country always, you know. It is a good place to get to when a man is running away from the law, I have no doubt. But a white man wants to get back to his own kind of people sooner or later."

"Nevertheless, I'd like to get my hands on William Pike," replied Leslie. "I'd choke that money out of him before he could spend much of it. I'll stake anything on that."

"We are pretty sure to get Pike some day," put in Nick Carter.

"If you say so, Carter, I'm sure of it," said Jefferson Arnold. "But, say, what is that thing you have in your hand, that scared them all and sent them flying back just when they seemed to be on top."

"Here it is," answered Nick, opening his hand. "It seems to have the most marvelous power I ever heard of in a small, ordinary-looking thing like this."

"I don't think it is very ordinary looking," remarked Chick. "But it certainly has the 'punch.' It is the ear of some idol, isn't it?"

"Yes. It is the thing that fell from the hand of that snake charmer. I never supposed it would serve us such a good turn as it has now."

"When the priests and wise men of Bolongu find that the ear of the great Mashonu is in the hands of a white man, it will most likely mean the death of all those."

It was Jai Singh speaking, and he swept his arm in all-embracing fashion to include all the men who were racing away in a cloud of dust a mile or more away.

"The ear of the idol Mashonu, eh?" observed Nick Carter musingly. "I have heard of that idol. I did not know I held such a precious relic. Well, I'll take care of it. Now, everybody! Right about face! Our cue is to get back to the lower country before we have any more trouble."

"Thank Heaven I am taking my boy back with me!" said Jefferson Arnold, in a voice that trembled with gratitude.

THE END.

"The Secret of Shangpore; or, Nick Carter Among the Spearmen," will tell you more about the adventures of the famous detective and his assistants in India. This story will be found in the next issue of NICK CARTER STORIES, No. 134, out April 3d.

ON A DARK STAGE.

By ROLAND ASHFORD PHILLIPS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 127 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

CURTAIN UP!

Klein did not join the throng in the ballroom, but went out upon the broad porch, paced it from end to end, studied the windows, and ran a critical eye along the green hedge that bordered the pebbled road. During a lull of the orchestra, the dull roar of the surf came to his ears. Remembering something, Klein walked out along the narrow footbridge to the summerhouse on the cliff edge.

There he bent down and examined a bundle that was hidden beneath a large rock, assured himself that everything was complete, then retraced his steps. Midway on the bridge he stopped.

Far below, the surf, its edges sparkling, rolled against the base of the cliff. Overhead, the white moon poured down its stream of silver.

Reaching the porch again, Klein met Mr. Lydecker and another man. One glance into the latter's face started a flood of memories.

Mr. Lydecker greeted Klein, then turned to his companion.

"Permit me. Mr. Klein, Mr. Jarge."

Their hands barely touched. "I believe I have had the honor of meeting Mr. Klein before," Jarge said quietly, his black eyes searching Klein's face.

"Yes," answered Klein, just as quietly; "I believe we

have met. It was on the Fall River boat, about a month ago, was it not?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lydecker. "Is that really so? What a coincidence, to be sure! I happened to meet Mr. Jarge on the Fall River boat, and it couldn't have been more than a month ago."

"It was the same night," Klein said. "I remember seeing you on board, Mr. Lydecker."

Klein instantly recalled the night in the smoking room, when he had watched Mr. Jarge following Mr. Klein and his daughter.

"Since that night," Mr. Lydecker was saying, "I have always had a warm place in my heart for Mr. Jarge. He was the ship detective, you know, and bless my soul if he didn't return my daughter's jewels before we even knew they had been stolen. Quite remarkable, don't you think so, Mr. Klein?"

"Very remarkable," answered Klein dryly.

Jarge, to all appearances, did not relish the conversation, and with a mumbled excuse he sauntered away.

"Yes, sir," Mr. Lydecker repeated, once they were alone, "Mr. Jarge won my instant admiration. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Klein, that I have engaged this man to mingle with my guests to-night. The robbery of last week has naturally made me nervous, and I concluded I would take measures to prevent another incident like that."

"You say that this Mr. Jarge was a detective on the Fall River boat?" Klein asked. "How did you find that out?"

"Why, he told me himself," replied Mr. Lydecker. "Besides, he returned all my daughter's jewelry, which she was foolish enough to leave in her stateroom when we went to dinner."

"And I suppose Mr. Jarge caught the thief, and you prosecuted him?"

"Why, no; not exactly. You see, Mr. Jarge asked me to keep the matter quiet. We did so."

"How does it happen that Mr. Jarge is in Hudson?" asked Klein.

"He has left the boat, and started in business for himself. He is very successful, too, I believe. I had almost to force him to take my case to-night."

"Is that so?" Klein smiled to himself. "But did it ever occur to you, Mr. Lydecker, that this Jarge might have had a good reason for gaining your friendship in the manner he did?"

"Why—why, what do you mean?" sputtered the older man.

"Do you really know anything about him, other than what he had told you himself?"

"I can't say I do," Mr. Lydecker admitted reluctantly. "But I do not see any reason for doubting——"

"If you had taken the trouble to inquire at the Fall River offices in this city, you would have learned that they do not, and never have, employed private detectives on any of their boats."

"Nonsense, Mr. Klein!" broke in the other, "I cannot believe that Mr. Jarge would deliberately lie to me. Besides, he has done me a great favor, and I appreciate it."

"You are allowing your daughter to wear some of her most valuable pieces of jewelry to-night, are you not, Mr. Lydecker?" Klein questioned, apparently changing the subject.

"Why, yes, I have allowed her to do so. You see, it is her birthday."

"And the majority of the women present are doing the same, I believe?"

Mr. Lydecker admitted that such was the truth. "But," he asked, "what has that to do with Mr. Jarge?"

"It might not have a thing in the world to do with him," responded Klein; "and again, it might."

They were interrupted at that moment, and the conversation was dropped.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A NEW TWIST TO THE PLOT.

Klein went indoors, and mingled with the guests. He saw that Tod was playing his part like a veteran. After one of the dances the two managed to exchange a few words.

"There's some surprise in certain quarters," Tod ventured, smiling.

"Well, it won't do any harm, now," Klein answered. "I knew you would be recognized, and for that reason I wanted you to keep under cover until the right time."

"Where have you been?"

"Talking with a friend of yours," Klein observed.

"Friend of mine?"

"Yes; Mr. Jarge."

"Is that man here?" exclaimed Tod.

"Very much so. Mr. Lydecker has engaged him as a private detective especially for this dance to-night."

"Good Lord!" The colt reporter whistled softly. "What do you make of it, Klein?"

"I intend making a lot of it, a little later on," responded Klein. "At least, I hope so. At present there is just one little gap to bridge. However, don't you forget your part in the drama."

"There isn't a chance in the world of my going up in the air now," Tod replied, in a confident voice. "So, whenever you're ready to ring down the curtain, go ahead; I'll be in the picture."

With this they parted, Tod hurrying back to the dance that was just starting, while Klein, avoiding Miss Lydecker, who seemed puzzled because he refused to join in the festivities, went out of the door, and stood for a time in the friendly shadows of the wide porch.

A sudden bustle among the dancers, following a waltz, told him that they were about going in for supper.

"My cue at last," he murmured to himself, thrilling a bit at the thought of the scene that was to come. "All the guests will be in the dining room now."

Swiftly he crossed the porch, gained the footbridge that led to Eagle's Nest, traveled its length, found the bundle he had previously examined, took it, and went into the summerhouse. He remained there for all of five minutes, and when he emerged he was wearing a long raincoat. He came back over the bridge, gained the shadow of the house, and was on the point of entering, when he stopped short. Hurrying around the corner, and coming to a halt within a few yards of where Klein had paused, came the detective, Jarge.

At the same moment a window, just above his head, opened and something flashed in the moonlight. Jarge's hand went out. It was all done before Klein could fully realize the meaning. Then swiftly it dawned upon him. He had expected it, but not at this moment.

Now, instantly alive to the situation, despite the fact that the scenes were being juggled, Klein stepped forward.

Until that time Jarge had not seen him. At the first sound, however, the detective whirled.

"Well?" he snapped, taken off guard, his voice far from a natural one.

"I'll trouble you for that necklace you just caught," Klein announced quietly.

"I—I don't know what you mean," Jarge was plainly upset, and was sparring for time.

"Don't hedge. I saw it. A necklace was dropped to you from that window. Give it to me!"

"I don't know——" began the other.

Klein advanced another step, gripped Jarge's wrist with one hand, and allowed the other to drop into the detective's pocket. Quick as a flash Jarge turned, but not in time to prevent the discovery. Klein's fingers brought forth the necklace from the pocket.

"You——" gasped the enraged detective.

"Don't waste your good breath," Klein interrupted, placing the necklace in his own pocket. "If I'm not greatly mistaken, you'll need all of it later on. By the way, do you happen to have Miss Lydecker's brooch with you tonight? I mean the one you got away with last week. Rather a neat plan, Jarge. Posing as a detective is quite a help, isn't it? And winning the respect of Mr. Lydecker by first stealing his daughter's jewels, then returning them, is another clever move on your part. You're an artist!"

Gradually Jarge was recovering from his first shock. And as Klein finished with his accusations he shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"Very good, Mr. Klein," he announced curtly. "Your deductions are well conceived. You're almost as clever an artist as myself." He laughed again. "But whatever you've discovered—and I admit it isn't a thousand miles from the truth—you'll keep to yourself. If I have been clever in one way I have been in others. You see, Mr. Klein, I work out all my plans according to system, and they seldom fail me."

"I'm afraid this will fail," Klein answered.

"Not at all. Momentarily interrupted—that is all. You had better run along and forget what you have just seen."

"You appear to be extremely confident that I——"

"It is a confidence inspired by careful scheming and mature deliberation," broke in the detective, his voice once more assuming that quiet drawl, which since the first had interested Klein. "And of course you will not think of mentioning to-night's incident, Mr. Klein, realizing the circumstances that surround you."

"I know of but one circumstance that could seal my lips," replied Klein, "and that would be an extreme one. As there are slight prospects of such a miracle taking place, I'm afraid, Mr. Jarge, you will be compelled to accompany me into the house. I'm sure Mr. Lydecker will be interested in learning the identity of the——"

"Don't you think the police of New York City would be as interested in finding you, Mr. Klein?" interrupted Jarge.

Klein's lips hardened. This, then, was the weapon with which the detective hoped to club him into silence.

"I am quite willing to return to New York—after to-night," he replied.

"It would be rather unpleasant, would it not? A man accused of assault to kill is not granted many favors. I do not like to see you deliberately put your head into a noose, Mr. Klein. Especially as I have twice saved you from capture."

"What's that?" Klein's heart started throbbing just a trifle faster than normal. "You saved me?"

"Yes. I was the unknown who aided you to escape that night in Mrs. Wold's boarding house. And several nights later, on board the *Providence*, I saved you from a certain zealous newspaper reporter, who had taken passage with the intention of apprehending you."

Klein could have shouted aloud at this unexpected confession. He was glad of the heavy shadows, for his face must have mirrored his thoughts. Only a wooden man could have remained stolid under similar circumstances.

That Jarge was the unknown who had pushed him through the door that night in Mrs. Wold's boarding house, with a whispered "Run for it!" in his ear, thereby saving him from the police, came as the proverbial bolt from the blue. Yet, instead of cowering Klein, as the other had naturally expected it would, the confession served to bridge the few remaining gaps in the otherwise perfect wall of the Delmar case.

"So in view of this, Mr. Klein," the detective spoke up after an interval of silence, apparently satisfied that his case had been won, "I presume you have no objections to returning the necklace. Also, that you are not as anxious to report what has taken place within the past fifteen minutes."

"On the contrary," Klein broke in sharply, "I have no intention of returning the necklace, other than to its owner. And as for repeating what I have just witnessed, I think such a statement would sound better from your own lips. Come along, Mr. Jarge!"

The detective objected strenuously to such an arrangement, until Klein produced a revolver. The polished barrel was sufficient inducement, and he walked meekly ahead of Klein.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CLIMAX.

Klein and his unwilling prisoner entered the large room, to find it cleared of all women. The men were grouped at one end of the room, and were talking in whispers. In a chair sat Tanner, his face colorless, his collar torn, his shirt rumpled. At his side stood Tod, flushed and triumphant. In front of both was Mr. Lydecker.

The moment Klein entered upon this scene, preceded by Jarge, an exclamation fell from Mr. Lydecker's lips. Tanner, looking up, started visibly, and a silent signal seemed to flash between him and Jarge. Klein alone noticed it, but said nothing.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lydecker, unaware for the second that Jarge was a prisoner. "I'm glad you're here, Mr. Jarge. We have discovered a painful——"

"Mr. Jarge is not talking at present," Klein interrupted. "At my request he is here to return the necklace which his confederate, Tanner, dropped to him from the window."

"D-dropped to him?" stammered Mr. Lydecker.

"Exactly. I am glad that we managed to catch both men at the same time." He beamed upon the excited reporter.

"I nabbed my man just as he opened the window," Tod said. "I guess he dropped the necklace at the same time."

Klein motioned Jarge to be seated. The detective obeyed sullenly. Then Klein brought the necklace from his pocket and handed it to Mr. Lydecker.

"Will you kindly return this to its rightful owner?" he said.

Mr. Lydecker accepted the necklace with trembling fingers. "This—this is all a mystery to me," he gulped. "I cannot understand. I—I——" He stopped, and looked helplessly at Klein.

"Perhaps Mr. Jarge, with the proper persuasion, will return your daughter's brooch, which he took last Saturday night," Klein said.

"You'll have to prove that," snarled Jarge, his black eyes blazing. "This whole affair is—is a mistake."

"A very serious mistake on your part," Klein answered. Then, facing Tanner squarely, he said: "What have you to say?"

"Nothing," replied Tanner.

"Following your instructions, Klein," broke in Tod, "I had the police called here."

Hardly had the words left the reporter's lips when the chief of police himself, accompanied by two detectives, entered the room.

"What is the trouble, Mr. Lydecker?" the chief asked sharply. "Another robbery?"

Mr. Lydecker nodded. "I—I guess Mr. Klein will explain the whole painful matter to you. I am all upset."

The chief turned to Klein, who, in a very few words, explained how he had come upon Jarge under the window just as the necklace was being dropped.

"This is the man who dropped it?" asked the chief, nodding toward Tanner.

"Yes," said Tod eagerly.

"And it was caught outside the window by this man?" the chief went on, nodding toward Jarge.

Klein answered in the affirmative. Then he added: "Do you happen to know of a Mr. Jarge, who is at the head of a private detective association?"

"Never heard of either one of them," was the blunt answer.

"If there was such an organization in the city you would undoubtedly be aware of it?"

"Certainly I would."

Klein smiled. "Mr. Lydecker has been imposed upon by a pair of clever crooks; one of them an actor, whom you have probably seen in the Hudson Stock Company; the other passing himself off as a detective. Last week they got away with Miss Lydecker's brooch, and to-night they probably figured upon a greater haul."

"How do you happen to know so much concerning them?" demanded the chief, plainly impressed, yet at the same time perplexed.

"I have been interested in the case for the past month," Klein answered frankly.

"Are you a detective?"

"I am an actor, who for a certain reason found it necessary to play the rôle of a detective," announced Klein.

"And that reason?" insisted the chief.

"The best reason in the world—for self-defense!"

"It is rather unusual for a man in your position to assume such a task without——"

"Will you allow me five minutes for a full explanation?" Klein asked. The chief agreed.

"A month ago," began Klein, "a friend of mine, Charles Delmar, was found unconscious on the roof of his boarding house, in New York City."

"I recall the case," broke in the chief, nodding.

"Previous to his assault, I was with him. I had stopped in on my way to the Albany Hotel, where I expected to get a theatrical engagement. I found my friend desperately in need of money—he had been ill and out of work for six months. In sympathy for him I forced him to take my clothes—his own were in rags—and apply for the position. I remained in his room until midnight, and as he did not return, was compelled to leave, wearing his clothes. On my way through the hall I was seen by the landlady, who, before I could explain, imagined I was a thief, and called the police. Before their arrival, however, I was aided in escaping by an unknown person, whom I learned to-night, from his own lips, to be Mr. Jarge. The next day I was astounded to hear of my friend's death, and still more surprised to learn that he was discovered on the roof of the house, clad in a suit of gray clothes."

"What was so surprising about that?"

"The simple fact that when I last saw him he was wearing my clothes, and they were of a peculiar shade of brown," Klein said.

The chief frowned, but nodded for Klein to proceed.

"An hour or two previous to my discovery I met a friend who declared he had seen a man entering the Albany Hotel wearing my suit. He was so positive of it that I came to the conclusion that this man was after the stock engagement sought by Delmar, and that he had assaulted my friend and changed clothes with him for the identical reason I had in changing clothes with Delmar. Realizing my own position in the matter, and the strong circumstantial evidence against me, I determined to take this clew, slight as it was, but the only one, apparently, and run it to earth. To clear myself of suspicion I had to apprehend the real criminal.

"Mr. Tod"—indicating the reporter—"is a representative of the New York *News*, and has been commissioned by his paper to find me. I outwitted him in New York, but he managed to trace me aboard the Fall River boat, and was on the point of having me arrested when this same obliging gentleman, Mr. Jarge, interfered and prevented it.

"I continued on to Fall River, after parting from Jarge at Newport, and from there traveled to Hudson, where the stock company in question is located. Here, as a supernumerary, I started my quest. I soon learned that the manager had signed three men that night in New York—Metcalfe, Tanner, and Dodge. So this was a more difficult problem for me to solve. I had to discover which of the three men was the right one, and at the same time keep my intentions secret. By substituting a photograph of my friend, Delmar, for another picture used in one of the scenes, I eliminated Dodge, and narrowed the suspicion down to Metcalfe and Tanner, both of whom had shown much concern over the photograph, and later demanded its removal from the frame.

"One night, in my dressing room, Tanner dropped a newspaper clipping, which I found and read, and which I thoughtlessly wrapped about a stick of grease paint, and placed in my make-up box, little thinking it would prove to be of any consequence. Last Saturday night, at a dance given in this house, Miss Lydecker's brooch was stolen. At first the case appeared to be a most puzzling one, since none of the men had left the room, and all of them readily submitted to a search. After I arrived home that same night I recollected that just before the brooch was missed, Tanner had opened a window. I saw instantly that in this way the brooch had been dropped to a confederate below. I also remembered that earlier in the even-

ing Miss Lydecker had seen a man skulking along in the shadow of the hedge. I made a search, but found nothing. This man Jarge evidently had been Tanner's confederate."

"Why did you not inform me of this?" broke from Mr. Lydecker, who was greatly agitated over the explanation.

"Because I was not positive," Klein replied, "and I did not care to make accusations until I had the proofs."

"Please continue, Mr. Klein," said the chief of police.

"Three days ago," Klein resumed, "while on a trip to Fall River, I was fortunate enough to save Mr. Tod from the hands of several enraged strikers. While this meeting was a surprise to me, and to him as well, the fact that he was wearing my brown suit—the suit taken from Delmar on the roof of his boarding house—was a still greater one. From Mr. Tod, who then refused to believe me guilty of the Delmar assault, owing to my action in protecting him, I learned he had been in Boston, and while there had chanced to overhear a conversation between two strangers which convinced him that Jarge was not a detective, but a clever crook posing as one, and known to those of the underworld as 'Doc.'"

The attentive chief of police exclaimed sharply: "Doc? Why, that man is wanted in half a dozen parts of the country!"

"Then you'll have the honor of arresting him," Klein replied. "Meanwhile," he went on, picking up the thread of his story, "Tod informed me that he had purchased my suit in a pawnshop opposite the station in Fall River. In searching the pockets we found a piece of folded newspaper. I saved it. A part of the paper is torn, and the clipping Tanner dropped from his pocket that night in my dressing room just fits that torn part!"

Tanner, who had remained silent while the evidence was piling up against him, suddenly leaped to his feet.

"It—it's a lie!" he burst out. "A lie! You can't——"

Tod jerked him back to his chair. "Sit down!" he commanded, glorying in his position. "When we want you to talk we'll let you know."

"Mr. Tod recognized Tanner as one of Mrs. Wold's roomers," Klein continued, "and that same night I sent her a telegram. In answering it she mentioned the fact that Tanner had occupied a room adjoining Delmar's, and on the morning of the assault had disappeared. She said, also, that a slim, black-eyed stranger was a frequent visitor to this room. From then on my case was as good as finished. I enlisted the services of Mr. Tod, and together we have managed to bring the little drama to a satisfactory conclusion."

Tanner, white-lipped, trembling with suppressed agitation, was on his feet again, despite Tod's effort to prevent him.

"There isn't a shred of truth in that yarn!" he cried hoarsely. "I—I didn't take the necklace—nobody saw me! I don't know a thing about this Delmar case! Never heard of it! I tell you it's all—all a lie!"

Klein, awaiting the favorable opportunity to spring his final and greatest surprise, suddenly stripped the raincoat from his shoulders, and faced the stammering, protesting Tanner.

A dead silence followed—few realized the situation—broken sharply by a scream from Tanner, as, wild-eyed, his nerves shattered by the strain he had labored under, and the story he had been compelled to listen to, beheld the telltale brown suit on its rightful owner.

One staring, agonized look, as though on the accusing face of his victim, and Tanner's spirit was broken. He was no weakling, but before this unexpected and daring stroke of Klein's the actor collapsed.

Another outburst followed the first, and, as if desirous of fleeing from further torment, Tanner whirled, knocked the astounded reporter aside, and sprang through the window.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNTANGLING THE WEB.

"Watch Jarge!" cried Klein to one of the detectives, as he sprang through the window, followed by the chief of police.

Tanner fell upon the porch, scrambled madly to his feet, gazed bewilderedly about him, then dashed away over the narrow footbridge that led to Eagle's Nest. Klein and the chief were a few paces behind.

At the summerhouse Tanner hesitated, vainly searching for an avenue of escape, seeming to realize, for the first time, that he was trapped. Suddenly, with a despairing cry, followed by a mocking, hysterical laugh, the actor-crook deliberately hurled himself against the frail railing, and as Klein darted forward with a cry of horror on his lips, Tanner disappeared over the edge of the cliff.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the chief, reaching Klein's side. "The man must have been mad!"

The two men peered over the cliff's edge. The white surf dashed at the rock base, thundering its eternal song, and the curling foam glistened in the moonlight like lace. That was all.

The men retraced their steps. As they reached the porch the chief said:

"There's a strong undertow along here, but I'll have my men look for the body."

When the news was given to those inside the house, Jarge's cloak of indifference dropped. Tanner's death broke his nerve. He huddled back in his chair, as if fear had come to him for the first time.

"I—I guess there's little use—in playing the game—to win, now," he murmured, his voice all but a whisper. "Let me congratulate you, Mr. Klein. You've whipped me at my own game. Tanner and I overheard you that night in Delmar's room. We were both pretty well down and out. We decided to get the engagement in Hudson, and——" He stopped, and was silent for a moment. "Well, you see how it has all turned out. Tanner hit Delmar, but he didn't intend to kill him. All he wanted was the suit; his own was in rags. I saved you—later in the evening—because I thought if you were caught your story would set the police on a new trail. As long as you were suspected, and kept out of sight, suspicion would not be turned our way. I did the same trick on the boat. I stole Miss Lydecker's jewels and returned them to Mr. Lydecker, passing myself off as a ship detective. I did this so that I might win his friendship. Tanner and I had long planned to rob this house."

"Bless my soul!" was all that Mr. Lydecker could say.

"And what about this suit?" questioned Klein.

"I pawned it in Fall River."

"And it was you, a week ago, whom Miss Lydecker saw?"

"Yes." Jarge put a hand into his waistcoat pocket, and brought out the brooch. "I haven't much use for this, now," he said. "I have carried it about with me because I didn't care to trust it to any one else, and I believed detection was next to impossible."

The chief of police took it, and handed it to Mr. Lydecker.

"I guess that is all," Jarge said, his hands falling limply into his lap. "And I'm glad it is over."

Metcalfe, the juvenile man, who had been a silent witness to the whole affair, suddenly stepped forward.

"Perhaps you've wondered why I was so upset the night you put Delmar's photograph in that 'prop' frame. Well, I suppose it was foolish of me at the time. But it happened that on the very day Delmar was assaulted, and probably just before you came, Klein, I visited Delmar in his room, and we had an unpleasant argument. Delmar was for throwing me out. We talked rather loud in the hall, and I noticed that a number of the roomers were taking some interest. Then, when I read the next morning that Delmar had been found unconscious, I—I instantly recalled our words, and fancied suspicion would fall upon me. That explains my actions."

"I was puzzled at first," Klein told him, "when both you and Tanner acted so suspiciously. And it was not until I had the case well unearthed that I realized you could have had no vital concern in the matter. Now, of course, your explanation clears everything."

Mr. Lydecker offered the use of his automobile to the chief, and it was readily accepted. The two detectives, with Jarge between them, left the room. As the chief followed he turned to Klein.

"You'll be the important witness in this case, Mr. Klein. I suppose Mr. Lydecker will vouch for your appearance?"

"Willingly, sir," answered Lydecker.

"Just a minute," broke in Tod. "Will you take me to the city? I've got to send my story in to the *News*."

"Plenty of room," the chief answered, smiling at the colt reporter's eagerness.

"Can you imagine Reed's surprise when he gets this?" Tod whispered aside to Klein. "Great Scott! This is one of the scoops you read about! See you later." And he hurried out to the waiting automobile.

* * * * * * * *

After the publication of Irving Tod's sensational scoop, Mr. Reed, the editor of the *News*, came to the conclusion that, after all, a son-in-law like Tod was not the worst thing that could be wished upon him. As for Claire Reed, she admitted, in time, that the possession of a devoted husband was more to be desired than a life sacrificed to the stage.

Hobart Klein is still a member of the Hudson Stock Company, but his name goes on the billing as "Owner and Stage Director." As actor-manager he has been called upon to assume many roles, but his most successful one, from a personal viewpoint, has been that of a husband; and he is upheld by a very able critic, Mrs. Helen Lydecker Klein.

THE END.

HIS EXACT SIZE.

There is a kind of selfish smartness which makes a man think well of himself, but which renders him a laughingstock, nevertheless. One rainy day, when a shoe shop was full of customers, a man entered hurriedly, and speaking to an assistant, who was fitting a lady, said:

"Can you show me some of those you advertise? I am in great haste."

Excusing himself to the lady, the assistant proceeded to wait upon the newcomer. Pair after pair of boots were tried on, and finally a perfect fit was secured.

"Now, what make are these boots?" inquired the man. "They fit me like a glove. Just write down the make, with the exact width and length."

The salesman did as required, and the man drew on his old shoes and started for the door.

"Don't you want the boots, sir?" inquired the surprised assistant.

"Oh, no," responded the man. "I just wanted to get my size. I have a friend in the wholesale business who can get them for me at a good deal less than your price," and he went off, followed by the unspoken opinion of the salesman and the laughter of several customers who had witnessed the affair.

A HINT TO TEACHERS.

Two teachers of languages were discussing matters and things relating to their profession.

"Do your pupils pay up regularly at the end of each quarter?" asked one of them.

"No, they do not," was the reply. "I often have to wait for weeks and weeks before I get my pay, and sometimes I don't get it at all. You can't well dun the parents for the money."

"Why don't you do as I do? I always get my money regularly."

"How do you manage it?"

"It's very simple. For instance, I am teaching a boy French, and on the first day of the quarter his folks don't send the money for the lessons. In that event I give him the following sentences to translate and write out at home: 'I have no money. The quarter is up. Hast thou got any money? I need money very much. Why hast thou not brought the money this morning? Did thy father not give thee any money?' That fetches them."

WHERE'S THE JOKE?

Daniel Webster liked to make remarks of a character intended to puzzle simple minds. Stopping to dinner one day at a country inn on his way to Marshfield, he was asked by the hostess if he usually had a good appetite.

"Madam," answered Webster, "I sometimes eat more than I do at other times; but never less."

The inhabitants of the village where this profound Hibernicism was uttered, have probably been at work ever since trying to comprehend its exact purport.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Eat More Corn Bread.

The suggestion that the American people get better acquainted with corn as a breadstuff, made in Mr. Boyce's talks recently, has brought many commendatory letters. Mr. Boyce called attention to the fact that corn is a universal crop in the United States. Demand from Europe has made wheat prices high, but Europe has not yet learned to eat our corn.

"Your advice should be heeded by everybody, in the cities and in the smaller places and country," says one letter, from an Iowa town. "Corn has been selling at from seventy-two to seventy-seven cents a bushel. Bulk cornmeal of good quality can be bought for three to five cents a pound. As you say, there is no better food in the wintertime. People have been eating too much wheat."

Another says: "We should eat more corn, instead of so much wheat, and also more graham flour and oatmeal. They all furnish the best kind of nutriment."

Eating of potatoes, rye bread, rice, oatmeal, and similar foods is also advocated. More attention should be paid to vegetables as a partial substitute for bread.

Corn is as healthful as it is economical. Those who make a practice of eating corn bread rarely suffer from indigestion, constipation, or kindred complaints.

Eighty-three, But He's a Speeder.

Though Alfred S. Hensley, of Stanhope, N. J., is eighty-three years of age, he would not be "dared" by some of his cronies, who wagered that he would not ride a motor cycle. Hensley was telling them how some years ago he was a "speed maniac" with a motor cycle. They laughed, and the old man jumped on the seat of a motor cycle and was off down the Stanhope-Newton Road like a shot. He went about half a mile and then turned back, covering the last quarter of a mile in sixteen seconds, and as he set the machine against the curb, he pocketed a wager with the remark:

"Well, I guess I'm still one of the young uns."

All Five Shots Hit Villain of a Play.

Lewis Benton, who has lived near Shingletown, Cal., fifty miles from a railroad or town, all his life, came to Sacramento the other day to settle up a timber claim at the United States land office.

Benton, who had read a great deal about the white-slave traffic and had heard something about moving pictures, looked up a newspaper reporter who had spent the summer with him, and together they attended a picture show.

Real trouble was reeled off at the theater. The films showed a stirring play, in which a deep-eyed villain with a silk hat and a cane did his worst for three reels. During the most thrilling portion of the play, when the villain tried to hurl one of his fair victims from the sixth story of a building, Benton could contain himself no longer.

He whipped out his forty-four-caliber revolver and began shooting at the screen. After the police had seized and hustled Benton away, the screen was examined, and it was found each of the five shots hit the curtain within the space of a silver dollar. When the pictures were run again, it was found that the villain was struck between the eyes by every bullet.

The newspaper man had a hard time explaining Benton's action to Police Judge Waldo Thompson. The judge finally consented to let Benton return to Shingletown minus his "shooting iron." The revolver was sent to him by parcel post.

Finds Money in a Chimney.

When he moved into a recently purchased house, Floyd Wilkins, of Georgetown, Del., was overjoyed to find a sum of money hidden behind a loose brick in the chimney. The money is supposed to have been placed there by the former owner of the house, who died several years ago. Wilkins has not disclosed the amount.

Pathetic Romance of Aged "Lonesome Bill."

While hunting for coon in the mountains north of Big Laurel, Va., the hunters came upon the cabin of old "Lonesome Bill," and seeing no light in the house, investigated and found the old man dead. Whether the aged hermit froze to death or died from illness no one knows, but it is thought that he had been in poor health for some time, and it is likely he succumbed to old age.

His exact age is not known, as all his family have long been dead or moved away, but it is supposed that he was near one hundred years old, probably older. The old man was seldom seen away from his mountain home, and how he lived is still a mystery. It is said that at the age of eighteen or twenty he came to the mountains from the eastern part of the State, with his father, mother, and three sisters. They were all nice people, and Bill, was well educated, having graduated from some Eastern university. He fell in love with one of the mountain girls near where his father had bought a large farm, and was about to marry her when his father, Mark Alexander, interfered.

There was some trouble between father and son, but the son finally succeeded in securing his father's consent to the marriage, but before the day came for the wedding the girl was taken sick and died after a few days' illness.

From the day of her death, Bill Alexander was a changed man. He went into the forest, high upon the mountainside, and built himself a rude cabin, where he lived until he died. At first he would see no visitors, and came near killing several persons, including his father.

Not many months later his father died and two sisters married, leaving his younger sister and mother alone. He received them in his cabin, and they remained with him for two days, when they sold out the farm, with the exception of his house and one acre, and left the country. The two sisters who married had already gone away with their husbands.

So Bill Alexander, the dashing young college man of eighty years ago, came to be simply "Lonesome Bill" to

the mountain people, and he was left to brood over his lost love alone. All traces of his people having been lost, he was buried by the side of the cabin he called home. The cabin contained nothing of importance, further than an old tintype of a young and pretty girl dressed after the fashion of the mountaineers a century ago.

Suit Over Nail in the Bread.

A nail and a tooth of a woman's comb or a piece of a toothpick found in loaves of bread that had not been touched by a human hand in the preparation or baking or delivery are the causes of a suit for damages brought by C. A. J. Qeek-Berner against the Ward Bread Company before Judge Aspinall and a jury in the Kings County Court, New York.

Mr. Qeek-Berner claims he found the nail and the other foreign substances with his teeth, and in so doing inflicted damage to said teeth and mental anguish to himself to the value of $50,000. The plaintiff testified he found a wire nail an inch and one-half long in one loaf of bread, and in trying to masticate it, he ruined five teeth. Later, in another loaf, he found a tooth from a woman's comb. Counsel for the defendant insisted that it was but a common toothpick.

Thirty-mile Race to Save $25,000.

With a package containing $25,000 in cash perilously near falling out of the open door of an empty express car, a Union Pacific fast-mail train speeded westward, from Omaha, Neb., pursued by a special train carrying the messenger who had missed his car.

The race continued for nearly thirty miles before the mail was overtaken. The package of money was found just a few inches inside the open doorway.

The money package was delivered just before the train started. It was placed just within the open door, and while the messenger was registering, the train of exclusive express cars pulled out of the station. The chase immediately was begun.

Flood Kills Caged Beasts.

Flood and storm conditions approaching those which swept southern and central Arizona with disastrous results a month ago were repeated several days ago. Two cities—Globe and Miami—were isolated. In the Salt River Valley damage amounting to more than $100,000 has been done. In Phoenix the streets were rivers, and animals valued at $30,000 were drowned in a menagerie.

Ranchers in the lowlands were caught unprepared and scores were rescued from trees and housetops by boats after their homes had been swept away. Many productive areas between here and Bisbee are still covered by the flood, which in places reached the highest stage recorded in twenty years.

$25,000 to Girl Who Kept Nice and Quiet.

Just how golden constant and well-regulated silence can be made was evidenced when Miss Bertha Gretsch, of New York, learned that Jacob Hyman had bequeathed her half of a $50,000 estate because she didn't laugh and talk when he took her fishing.

Hyman, who was seventy-three years old when he died lived with Miss Gretsch's parents for many years, and since her early childhood she was his constant companion. Being of a silent and contemplative nature, the aged man enjoined her to always sit still and not be giddy when she was about with him, particularly when he went angling. She was, however, permitted to utter monosyllables in monotone when he made an unusually good catch.

Regarding a loud laugh as one of the disturbers of philosophic calm, Mr. Hyman was opposed sternly to visible and risible mirth. And because Miss Gretsch could fish without giggling or otherwise impeding the sound of absolute silence, she is now an heiress. She is twenty-two years old and is a graduate of Erasmus Hall High School. Mr. Hyman was noted during the latter years of his life for his benefactions to Jewish institutions. He was in business for some time at 5 Beekman Street.

Another Man Restores Stealings.

W. H. Chapin, convicted of larceny by bailee in Portland, Ore., for appropriating to his use $3,500 belonging to Mrs. Marion Annie Grace, was given a full pardon by Governor Oswald West, who executed the instrument upon receiving a bond signed by Chapin's friends guaranteeing that he would make restitution.

Mrs. Grace and her husband, an aged couple, alleged that they had placed their savings in Chapin's hands for investment, and that he had converted the money to his own use.

Governor West notified Chapin that if he would guarantee full restitution, a pardon would be forthcoming.

"It seems more important," wrote the governor, "that these old people should be provided for than that Chapin should go to the penitentiary."

Government Plan to Aid Unemployed.

The Federal department of labor has completed the preliminary work in connection with the Federal employment bureau, and necessary blanks are being sent employers throughout the country and to post offices for distribution to persons seeking employment.

It is the purpose of Secretary Wilson and his department to act as a clearing house for those who seek employment and those who have employment to offer. Both union and nonunion workers and proprietors of open or closed shops throughout the country are interested in these operations of the department.

It is Secretary Wilson's intention, it is further stated, to try to induce municipalities which contemplate building projects and public improvements to begin their work as soon as possible. Mr. Wilson believes the greater part of this work should be done in times of industrial depression and less should be done during periods of great industrial activity.

Finally, the secretary of labor believes it will be necessary ultimately for the Federal government to actually put the unemployed on the land. He favors a plan much like the one provided for Ireland by the Gladstone bill. The government bought the land, cut it up into small farms, built houses and other improvements, placed a family on each farm, and received payment in amounts little larger than taxes.

War Costs German Trade in Chemicals.

The German exports of chemical products, in the manufacture of which that country undoubtedly led the world, have been virtually entirely cut off since the outbreak of

hostilities. Last year they attained the enormous figure of about $250,000,000.

German experts in this trade, however, express no fear as to the future. They are of opinion that the competition which has started in other countries will, after the cessation of the war, only tend to sharpen the edge of the inventiveness of German chemists, who will, they say, be able to make further chemical discoveries which will place them in a position at least equal to that which they have hitherto held.

Quitting Booze and Smokes.

Under the conditions that he neither smokes nor uses intoxicants until he is thirty years of age, Charles Gordon Emery II., of Watertown, N. Y., is left the sum of $50,000 in trust by the will of his grandfather, Charles G. Emery, the tobacco millionaire, filed for probate here to-day. The estate amounts to between four and five million dollars.

Bear Curfew in Jersey.

Women and children of Vernon, N. J., are staying indoors nowadays from fear of bears. Two or three have stolen sheep and beehives lately, carrying their loot into the woods and swamps on the outskirts of the town. Hunters are organizing to put a stop to the bear raids.

Thanks Good Samaritan of '61.

A resolution was adopted by the legislature of Vermont commending Mrs. Bettie van Metre, of Berryville, Va., for her care of Lieutenant Bedell, of Westfield, Vt., after he was injured during the Civil War.

Lieutenant Bedell's leg was broken by a shell in a battle at Opequon, Va., and he was left behind by his regiment. He was picked up unconscious and carried to the house, where he was left in an attic room for three days without proper care, until Mrs. van Metre, then a girl of twenty years, heard of his condition, and insisted on acting as nurse. She watched over him, regardless of criticisms, until he was able to be moved back to his Vermont home. She then accompanied him on a troop train, and afterward returned to Virginia.

Indians' Football Dates.

The athletic officials at the Carlisle Indian School have announced the 1915 football schedule, which contains one game less than last season.

Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, Notre Dame, and Syracuse have been dropped, and Harvard, Bucknell, and Fordham take their places.

It has not yet been decided as to who will coach Carlisle on the gridiron during the coming season, although there are a number of applicants, among whom are former Indian football stars, as well as graduates of leading universities.

The schedule follows:

September 18, Albright College vs. Carlisle Indians, at Carlisle; September 25, Lebanon Valley vs. Carlisle Indians, at Carlisle; October 2, Lehigh University vs. Carlisle Indians, at South Bethlehem; October 9, Harvard University vs. Carlisle Indians, at Cambridge, Mass.; October 16, University of Pittsburgh vs. Carlisle Indians, at Pittsburgh; October 23, Bucknell vs. Carlisle Indians, at Carlisle; October 30, West Virginia Wesleyan vs. Carlisle Indians, at Wheeling, W. Va.; November 6, Holy Cross College vs. Carlisle Indians, at Worcester, Mass.; November 13, Dickinson College vs. Carlisle Indians, at Carlisle; November 20, Fordham University vs. Carlisle, at New York City; November 25, Brown University vs. Carlisle Indians, at Providence.

Has a Five-footed Pig.

R. S. Givens, living between Georgetown and Laurel, Del., has a hog which has five perfectly formed feet. The freak is attracting much attention from the residents in the western part of the country, and hundreds have been to see it within the past few weeks.

Worked Fourteen Years, Never Asked Pay.

Here is a man who worked for about fourteen years as a clerk without compensation. He is Edward A. Noonan, of New York, who went into the employ of John Fox & Co., manufacturers of iron pipes, on August 23, 1900, but he never received anything for his work except a promise of twenty-five dollars a week.

The remarkable fortitude of Noonan in waiting fourteen years for a pay day that never came around, figures in the accounting of the estate of John Fox, late representative and president of the National Democratic Club, which was filed in the surrogates' court yesterday. Mr. Fox was senior member of the firm that employed Noonan, and the latter has made a belated claim for $19,500 back salary.

Even while the affairs of the estate were being straightened out in the office of former Surrogate Charles H. Beckett, attorney for the executors, Noonan did some clerical work in connection with the estate. But he never mentioned anything about his claim. The estate also advertised for claims, but Noonan paid no attention.

Not until the accounting was to be filed did he assert his desire to be paid his salary. However, there will be no pay day for the unpaid clerk in the near future, as the estate is not inclined to recognize the claim, and it will be made the subject of a jury trial in the surrogates' court under the new law.

The accounting shows that John Fox, son of the former politician, received only $1,121 as his first year's income from the estate, while Eleanor B. Fox, granddaughter, received $1,000, and Mrs. Catherine O'Brien, a niece, a similar amount.

1,827,000 Persons Get Aid in France.

Official statistics give the number of applications for government aid as 2,116,000, of which 261,000 were refused. At present daily allowances are paid to 1,827,000 persons, the average a family being two francs 10 centimes—forty-two cents. The daily outlay is 3,900,000 francs—$780,000.

Much Despised Weed Has Medicinal Value.

Thymol is an important antiseptic. For years it has been manufactured almost exclusively in Germany, from a plant cultivated in India. At the beginning of the European war the price of this medicinal chemical rose from two dollars to seventeen dollars a pound.

"Yet during all these years," says Professor E. Kremers, of the University of Wisconsin, "while we have been importing about ten thousand pounds of thymol annually, a weed growing on the sandy areas along the lower

course of the Wisconsin River has probably been producing enough thymol to have supplied the entire United States in the present crisis."

Although attention has been directed again and again to this medicinal agent, this weed has been allowed to go to waste. Because of its thymol, it is not even touched by grazing cattle or sheep. Yet after the thymol has been removed, the exhausted plant is eaten by animals, and may thus be converted into a useful agricultural product.

Now that the supply from Europe is cut off, requests for seed and plants have been received at the Wisconsin pharmaceutical experiment station.

Once Rich, Now Beggar.

Unshaven and shabbily clad, "Colonel" William Wayne Beldin, who says he was at one time independently wealthy, was found guilty of mendicancy by Magistrate Deuel, in the Tombs police court, New York, and sentenced to the workhouse for ten days.

Beldin, who retains traces of his former gentility, says he was at one time vice president of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad. Unfortunate speculation in Wall Street, he says, dissipated his fortune, and for a time he was supported through allowances paid to him by relatives and former friends.

Five years ago these founds ceased to be forthcoming, and he obtained a position as a waiter in a small restaurant. Finally he lost even this humble position.

According to Patrolman Gavan, of the Old Slip Precinct, Beldin was begging Saturday night from passers-by opposite the Stock Exchange. After he was placed under arrest, he told the police he had relatives in the South who would be glad to care for him if he could find them.

One Day of Rest Upheld.

The constitutionality of the law securing to employees in factories and mercantile establishments twenty-four consecutive hours of rest every week, as applied in New York State, was upheld by a unanimous decision of the court of appeals in that State.

The decision was given in an appeal from judgments of the city court of Buffalo convicting the Klinck Packing Company, of that city, of violating the law. The statute is known as "the one day of rest in seven" law. The employers will carry the case to the United States Supreme Court.

Death Valley Now an Eden.

Death Valley, recently placed on the social map by a dance to which girls were invited and provided with transportation by the bachelors of the mining camps, is about to be transformed from an Eveless Eden into an Eden densely populated with femininity.

Following Death Valley's great ball and the importation of music from Los Angeles, a deluge of letters from Adamless Eves has descended on the mining camps.

The dance was arranged by young college men, mining engineers, and employees in Death Valley. They invited girls from Goldfield, Ludlow, and Los Angeles, providing each with railroad fare. An orchestra went from Los Angeles. It was a gala affair. Robert M. Pease, who arranged it, is being deluged with letters from women who want to move to Death Valley. Pease writes:

"Behold, I am being deluged with a hopeless mass of communications from all 'Adamless Eves' in Christendom. I am receiving pounds of pressed roses and violets; I am receiving offers to mend my socks, to sew my buttons, to cook for me; requests for programs, requests for photographs, and, yea, even requests for transportation."

Facts You May Not Know.

The earliest record in journeying around the world was held by Magellan at something less than three years—the latest stands at thirty-five days and twenty-one hours. It has taken us nearly four centuries to lower it to this extent. To reduce it in the next four hundred years in the same proportion, we should have to make the circuit, in A. D. 2314, in about a day.

The California-Mexican border covers 152 miles. Arizona has 300 miles of border on Mexico. New Mexico neighbors with the Mexicans for 410 miles, and Texas lies along the Mexican boundary for more than 900 miles.

A pipe organ has been installed in a Massachusetts church which produces a tone so law that it can be felt rather than heard.

The life of the domestic horse is about twenty-eight years, while that of the wild one is thirty-eight years.

A National Forest is Lost.

Lost: A national forest. Last seen somewhere in Michigan. Three thousand dollars reward. Finder please hold until called for.

During the debate on the agricultural appropriation bill in the House, at Washington, D. C., the reading clerk was interrupted by Representative Fordney, of Michigan, when he read the item appropriating $3,000 for the care of the Michigan national forest.

"Mr. Chairman," said Mr. Fordney, "I'd just like to inquire of the chairman of the committee where that forest is located."

Chairman Lever confessed his ignorance, and no one else could enlighten the Michigan man.

The item was left in the bill, however, for fear the forest might be discovered and left without provision.

Figure Seven Hit Lucky Number.

Calvin Ross, real-estate dealer, of Shelbyville, Ind., has just celebrated his seventy-seventh birthday. Referring to his anniversary, Ross said: "I was born at seven p. m. on the seventh day of the week and the twenty-seventh day of the month in 1837. I was the seventh son and the seventh and last child of my family."

He is convinced that he will live to be eighty-seven years old. He says he has never been sick a day in his life.

Poor Man Proves Right to Patent.

After having been scoffed at for years while he struggled to achieve his ambition and never once lost hope, Albert S. Janin has been declared inventor of the hydroaëroplane, or flying boat.

The decision was given against Glenn H. Curtiss, the famous aëroplane builder, who had heretofore been credited with the creation of the hydraëroplane, by the examiners in chief of the patent office in Washington, the appeal board in all questions of patents.

Janin, a poor carpenter, living in a suburb of New York City, has for years skimped his wife and seven chil-

dren in the necessities of their daily life, for the sake of carrying out his idea. He lost friends on account of it; they pointed to their heads as he passed and said "wheels." The neighbors and the capitalists whom he tried to persuade to finance his dream repeatedly told him he was going crazy.

"It all came from the flying fishes and the sea gulls," said Janin. "I was what is called a cadet representing the government on a mail ship in 1899. I was detailed to a steamer running down South and used to stand on the bridge and watch the flying fish rise in an arc from the surface of the sea. I used to say: 'If a fish can do that, I can make a machine do the same stunt.' That's why I got the idea of the water machine first, while the others worked on the land-machine idea.

"The notion about warping the wings I got from the sea gulls that were always sailing around us. So I began to make drawings of flying boats. Right away my friends said: 'Crazy.'"

The difficulties through which Janin has made his way are hinted at in the decision of the examiners in chief. Here, for example, is an excerpt from their report:

"Following the date of his conception—of the invention—Janin made drawings, and in 1909 attempted to build a full-sized device himself. He, however, was a poor man, evidently struggling to meet his current living expenses.

"From what his witnesses testify it is apparent that he was continually striving to raise funds to develop his ideas, which were regarded by many as illusionary."

Without the help of any one, and with no encouragement except the sympathy of his wife, Janin persisted in completing his invention. The value of the aid given him by Mrs. Janin can only be guessed from the few words he said of her.

"Everybody laughed at me except the family. They were game. My wife was a sticker, even when there was sickness in the family, and a lot of troubles that I won't tell about. She believed in me all the way."

Finally, in January, 1911, Janin made application for a patent on his design for the flying boat. August 22d of the same year Glenn H. Curtiss applied for a patent on the same "counts." The examiner in the patent office gave the patent to Curtiss. Now that Janin has won on his appeal to the examiners in chief, he will get a royalty on the flying boats which will make him rich.

Warns of Boiler Danger.

There are over 500 boiler explosions in North America every year. The records show that many of them are accompanied by fatalities. A little invention which promises to do much toward preventing such accidents has just been completed and patented by two Canadian engineers, John J. Oglivie and Fred F. Dier, of Ottawa. It is called an "electric-signal water column."

As the name implies, the invention is a column to be attached to the boiler, answering the purpose of a water glass. By an ingenious electric apparatus, the height of the water is recorded by means of small glow lamps. As the water rises or falls, so the lamps at a corresponding position are lighted or extinguished. Should the water fall below the safety level, the next lamp below is red one, and as soon as the water reaches the level of this, the red globe shines forth and an electrical alarm rings. The tube in which the water rises and falls is cast iron, three inches in diameter, which eliminates any possibility of it becoming clogged and thus registering a false level of water, which has happened in ordinary gauges.

A useful attachment to the water gauge on the boiler is an indication board, a duplicate of the one on the boiler, which may be installed in any part of the building where a steam boiler is run. Thus a superintendent is constantly aware of the state of a boiler, as the same lamps, globes, and alarm are used. The water column is made for use on locomotives, ships, water tanks, or any mechanism where water levels have to be registered.

"The device is a fuel and labor saver as well as a life saver. It has met with the approval of many of our boiler inspectors," writes Oglivie, who is chief engineer of the department of mines at Ottawa.

Catches Chickens With Net.

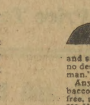
Lewis Johnson, a young man who lives on his uncle's farm near Troutdale, Ore., has invented a novel contrivance wherewith to catch timid chickens without the customary breakneck chase. Lewis was commissioned to catch the fowls for several large dinners, and it required a deal of chasing. He now has a neatly woven net, a fish-net in resemblance, round in shape, borders lined with auto drive chain, and a long rope attached to the middle of the net.

The net is compact and looks small enough, but when released by throwing, much as a lasso is thrown, it spreads out uniformly to a nine-foot circle. The spreading is automatic and the fall swift, so there is little chance for the fowl to escape.

Spoon in Two Parts.

The germless spoon is to be added to the individual drinking cups, pie plates, napkins, and other "use-once" devices. In a lunch place where people are fed by hundreds, a spoon is thrust into a large number of mouths during the course of its career, and should it be indifferently cleaned, it would afford a playground for millions of germs, according to the experts who study such things. The "germless spoon" has a new bowl for every use. Only the handle is used more than once. The bowl is of paper or compressed fiber. Means is provided for locking the two parts together for use, after which the bowl is destroyed and the handle goes to the kitchen for a bath.

HOW HE QUIT TOBACCO



This veteran, S. B. Lamphere, was addicted to the excessive use of tobacco for many years. He wanted to quit but needed something to help him.

He learned of a free book that tells about tobacco habit and how to conquer it quickly, easily and safely. In a recent letter he writes: "I have no desire for tobacco any more. I feel like a new man."

Anyone desiring a copy of this book on tobacco habit, smoking and chewing, can get it free, postpaid, by writing to Edward J. Woods, 230 H, Station E, New York City. You will be surprised and pleased. Look for quieter nerves, stronger heart, better digestion, improved eyesight, increased vigor, longer life and other advantages if you quit poisoning yourself.

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